

An Ideal Brother-Love



Jaydayal Goyandka

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त्वमेव	माता	च	पिता	त्वमेव
त्वमेव	बन्धुश्च		सखा	त्वमेव ।
त्वमेव	विद्या		द्रविणं	त्वमेव
त्वमेव	सर्वं	मम		देवदेव ॥
tvameva	mātā	ca	pitā	tvameva
tvameva	bandhuśca		sakhā	tvameva
tvameva	vidyā		draviṇaṁ	tvameva
tvameva	sarvaṁ	mama		devadeva

It is You; the mother and father both,
 It is You; the brother and friend both,
 It is You; the knowledge and riches both,
 It is You; all in all, O my Lord.

Jaydayal Goyandaka

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Preface

We are very much pleased to present this article titled 'An Ideal Brother-Love' in the Ramayana, in a book form. The Ramayana is not merely a history or a book of literature, it is a true guide also to initiate the human life constantly to go ahead on the well ordered auspicious path of life. In the Ramayan we get the apparent view of the glorified divine body of the Maryada Purushottam Shri Ramchandraji. The Ramayan is not merely a Hindu culture, but it is also the spirit of the human culture. If the ideals of the Ramayana are adopted to organise and run the human society, the days are not very far when the peace and prosperity of the Ram Rajya will prevail over everywhere.

In the present book on the basis of Shri Valmiki, Shri Adhyatm and the Ramayan written by Shri Tulsidasji, a very pleasant description of the mutual love and devotion of the four brothers—Shri Ramchandra, Bharat, Lakshman and Shatrughna has been presented. This book can prove to be very useful to extinguish the blazing fire of hostility between the two own brothers usually because of the self interest and having become empty of wisdom being overwhelmed by the mirage of worldly attachment and negligible physical enjoyments and comforts. The language is simple and effective. While reading our eyes are overflowed with the emotional tears of love.

As regards the usefulness of this book, it will be sufficient to say that this book is only a ray of the second part of the book—'Tattva Chintamani'; written by reverent Shri Jaydayalji Goyandaka. By the effect of its light, the fear of the bite of the serpent of the two brothers hostility can be wiped out forever. On the request of many well-wishers, this article has been published in the form of a separate book to make it in the reach of common people easily. The dear readers should take advantage by reading it.

—Publisher

॥ Shri Hari ॥

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An Ideal Brother-Love

Maryada Purushottama Lord Shri Ram

अनुज जानकी सहित प्रभु चाप बान धर राम।

मम हिय गगन इंदु इव बसहु सदा निहकाम॥

‘May the image of the Lord Ram with a bow and arrow in His hands along with the younger brother and Janakiji inhabit in my free from all desires heart forever like the moon in the firmament of the sky.’

None like Shri Ramchandraji as the protector of decorum has ever been born, it will not be an exaggeration to say. Shri Ram was the manifestation of the Supreme Almighty God. He had incarnated for the protection of righteousness and emancipation of the worldly beings. Our mind is charmed and the waves of holy feelings begin to rise in the heart to hear, read and remember His ideal pastimes. His every action is extremely pious, charming to mind and worth following. It is childish for a man like me to write something about Shri Ram, the ocean of numberless virtues and merits; even then, I dare to write a little on the basis of Shastras for my own amusement, may the men of letters should excuse me. Shri Ram was the embodiment of all the virtuous attributes. There was the queer mixture of all the highest merits of the virtues as truthfulness, selfless friendship of all beings, serenity, forgiveness, kindness, modesty, soft-heartedness, valiancy, patience, fearlessness, humility, peace,

endurance, apathy, prudence, splendour, love, protectiveness of propriety, single wife-devotion, the pleasing attitude to the subjects, promptness in promise, well disposed towards Brahman, devoted to mother, father and preceptor, great love for the brothers, simplicity, sociability, affection for the shelter-seekers, sacrifice, helper of the saints and hermits, annihilation of the wickeds, the feeling of fraternity, free from hostility, friendliness and popularity etc., in Shri Ram. The combination of all the attributes, prospered in a single personality is impossible to be noticed in the whole universe. Remembering His ideal behaviour with mother-father, brother-friend, wife-son, the attendants—subjects etc., our mind becomes ecstatic. The popularity like Shri Ram's has been never seen till now. At that time, there was no being but Kaikeyi and Manthara to remain escaped of being spell bound by His behaviour and love. Infact, even, Kaikeyi remained always charmed by Shri Ram's loving attitude and his splendour. To hear about the coronation of Shri Ram, she had called Manthara to give her gift. She had full confidence on the virtues of Shri Ram. At the time of Ram's banishment, the hostile Kaikeyi becomes bound to express her spontaneous overflow of true feelings—

तुम्ह अपराध जोगु नहिं ताता । जननी जनक बंधु सुखदाता ॥
 राम सत्य सबु जो कछु कहहू । तुम्ह पितु मातु बचन रत अहहू ॥

'You are hardly capable of any offence, dear son, a source of delight that you are to your parents and brothers. What you say is all true. You are devoted to the words of your father and mother.'

The unpleasant and harsh treatment of Kaikeyi to Ram was motivated by God's will and the inspiration of God's for the welfare of the human beings. This never proves that Shri Ram was not loving to Kaikeyi. Shri Ram was free from hostility to anyone, either human beings or animals and birds. Even the episodes that occur in connection with hostility and war with demons, destroyers of sacrifices and with Khara-dushan, Trishira, Ravan, Kumbhakarn, Meghanad etc., after lopping off the nose and ears of Shurpanakha, are also full of mystery. In fact, Ram had no hostile attitude in His mind towards them at all. Even the demons repeated His name in their mind with hostile attitude for their own as well as their family's emancipation. The words of Ravan and Marich reveal it—

सुर रंजन भंजन महि भारा । जौं भगवंत लीन्ह अवतारा ॥
तौ मैं जाइ बैरु हठि करऊँ । प्रभु सर प्रान तजें भव तरऊँ ॥
होइहि भजनु न तामस देहा । मन क्रम बचन मंत्र दूढ़ एहा ॥

'If therefore, the Lord Himself, the Delighters of the gods and the Reliever of Earth's burden has appeared on Earth, I will go and resolutely fight with Him and cross the ocean of mundane existence by falling to His arrows. Devotion to God is out of question in this demoniac body, which is made up of the Tamas, the principle of ignorance —Ravan.'

मम पाछें धर धावत धरें सरासन बान ।

फिरि फिरि प्रभुहि बिलोकिहउँ धन्य न मो सम आन ॥

'As He runs after me on the foot, carrying His bow and arrow, I shall again and again turn in order to get a sight of my Lord! No one else is so blessed as I am.

It proves that in Shri Ram's time, as was the ideal love of animate and inanimate beings to Shri Ram, such has neither been heard nor noticed for anyone till now.

What a great ideal of Shri Ram's devotion to His mother is! Not to mention His devotion to His own mother as well as other mothers; Shri Ram treated even Kaikeyi who behaved hard to him, with devotion and regard.

The moment when Kaikeyi ordered Shri Ram for banishment, He said to her with due regard—'Mother! Here, I am beneficent in all respects—

मुनिगन मिलनु बिसेषि बन सबहि भाँति हित मोर।

तेहि महँ पितु आयसु बहुरि संमत जननी तोर॥

'In the forest, I shall get more frequent opportunities of meeting hermits, which will be beneficial to me in everyway. On top of it I have my father's command and your approval to boot, mother.

Shri Ram said to his angry brother, Lakshman—

यस्या मदभिषेकार्थं मानसं परितप्यते।

माता नः सा यथा न स्यात्सविशङ्का तथा कुरु॥

तस्याः शङ्कामयं दुःखं मुहूर्तमपि नोत्सहे।

मनसि प्रतिसंजातं सौमित्रेऽहमुपेक्षितुम्॥

न बुद्धिपूर्वं नाबुद्धं स्मरामीह कदाचन।

मातृणां वा पितुर्वाहं कृतमल्पं च विप्रियम्॥

(Valmiki Ramayan, 2/22/6—8)

'Take steps to ensure that that mother of ours viz., Kaikeyi, whose mind is greatly troubled over the question of my installation, is not filled with apprehension (that I may assume a revolting attitude and refuse to leave the

capital). "I cannot afford to ignore even for a while, O darling of Sumitrā, the agony in the form of apprehension aroused in her mind. I do not remember the least offence ever given by me consciously or unwittingly to my mothers or to my father in this life.'

Thenafter, Shri Ramji said to Bharatji while going back from the forest—

कामाद्वा तात लोभाद्वा मात्रा तुभ्यमिदं कृतम्।

न तन्मनसि कर्तव्यं वर्तितव्यं च मातृवत्॥

(Valmiki Ramayan, 2/112/19)

'O dear! No matter whether all this was wrought by your mother in your interest from affection for you or from greed of sovereignty through your installation as Prince-Regent, my darling, it should not be taken to heart by you and you should behave towards her as towards a mother.'

It reveals Ram's great devotion to His mothers. Once, in the forest, Lakshman said something condemning Kaikeyi. On this whatever the mother-devotee and lover of brother's Shri Ram said, is worth considering forever—

न तेऽम्बा मध्यमा तात गर्हितव्या कदाचन।

तामेवेक्ष्वाकुनाथस्य भरतस्य कथां कुरु॥

(Valmiki Ramayan, 3/16/37)

'Dear brother, Kaikeyī, our second mother, should never be condemned by you. Speak exclusively about that Bharata, the king of the Ikṣvākus'

Similarly His paternal devotion is also unique. To keep His father's words true what was left undone by Shri Ram? When Shri Ram asked Kaikeyi the cause

of his father's grief seeing him in grief, she said—'The king has something in his mind what he does, not disclose to You due to Your fear. You are very dear to him. The words unpleasant to you, don't come out of his mouth, if you promise to obey the king, he may say, You must act upon for which he has given me his words.' In reply Shri Ram said—

अहो धिङ् नार्हसे देवि वक्तुं मामीदृशं वचः।
अहं हि वचनाद्राज्ञः पतेयमपि पावके॥
भक्षयेयं विषं तीक्ष्णं पतेयमपि चार्णवे।

(Valmiki Ramayan, 2/18/28-29)

'Oh ! How shameful it is for me to hear such words expressing doubt about my devotion to my father ! You ought not to speak such words to me, O glorious lady ! At the bidding of my father I am actually prepared to leap into fire. I might as well swallow deadly poison and take a plunge into the ocean.' Once, when Lakshman said—'It is immoral to obey such a passionate father' Shri Ram, quoting the example of the sons of Sagar and Parashuram etc., said—'Father is the god apparently, what was the reason of his giving words is not my matter of thought, I am not a thinker, I will obey my father at any cost.'

Shri Ram had said clearly to His lamenting mother Kausalya—

नास्ति शक्तिः पितुर्वाक्यं समतिक्रमितुं मम।
प्रसादये त्वां शिरसा गन्तुमिच्छाम्यहं वनम्॥

(Valmiki Ramayan, 2/21/30)

"I have no courage to flout the command of my father and as such wish to proceed to the forest. I,

therefore, solicit your favour in the form of leave to depart with my head bent low. '

Shri Ram's single-wife-vow is an ideal, what a great love Shri Ram had for His wife Sita is revealed on looking of the condition of Shri Rama after Sita's kidnapping. Being mad due to separation of Sita with tearful eyes the great Shri Ram, famous for His endurance and vigour asks for the location of Sita from Kadamb, Bel, Ashok etc., trees and deers. Here, Lord Shri Ram has, as it proved by His action and character, the words of the Gita 'ये यथा मां प्रपद्यन्ते तांस्तथैव भजाम्यहम्।' (Gita 4/11) is true. 'Arjuna, howsoever men seek Me, even so do I approach to them'. He wails bitterly, He makes delirious talk in lamentation, He becomes bereft of senses like a mad, He becomes unconcious and He happens to call 'O Sita', 'O Sita.'

Shri Ram's love for his friends is also peerless. When His friendship with Sugriv is established He mentions the characterisitics of friendship—

जे न मित्र दुख होहिं दुखारी । तिन्हहि बिलोकत पातक भारी ॥
निज दुख गिरि सम रज करि जाना । मित्रक दुख रज मेरु समाना ॥
देत लेत मन संक न धरई । बल अनुमान सदा हित करई ॥
बिपति काल कर सतगुन नेहा । श्रुति कह संत मित्र गुन एहा ॥

'One would incur great sin by the very sight of those who are not distressed to see the suffering a friend, in distress. A man should regard his own mountain-like troubles as of no more account than a mere grain of sand, while the troubles of a friend should appear to him like Mount Sumeru, though really they may be as trifling as a grain of sand. A friend should give and take things without any scruple and

serve his friend's interest to the best of his ability and finding him in distress love him a hundred times more than ever. The Vedas declare these to be the qualities of a noble friend.'

Again assuring him He says—

सखा सोच त्यागहु बल मोरें । सब बिधि घटब काज मैं तोरें ॥

'Relying on my strength, dear friend, grieve no more, I will serve your cause in all possible ways to tide over all difficulties and also accomplish your goals.'

Similarly, Ram's love for His brother is also non-comparable. The ideal love of brotherhood what the Ramayan teaches us, is nowhere in the entire history of the universe. A great deep mutual love was there among the Pandavas also. Our heart is melted to read the fables of their mutual love among all the five brothers and we start singing hymn in the praise of its glory but this love of brotherhood cannot be compared to the brotherhood-love of the Ramayan. The ideal of the brotherhood-love in the Mahabharat age was much more inferior to that of the Ramayan age. What is to talk of this age which is full of quarrels only even on the trifling matters and where the brothers are murdered for the insignificant enjoyments and comforts. Here, in this article the brotherhood-love of all the four brothers including Shri Ram is described as a bird's eye view.



Shri Ram's Brotherhood-Love

Since His childhood Shri Ram had a great affection for all the three brothers. He always guarded them and tried to please them. Even in the sports and games He didn't let them to be sad. Even in His victory He used to accept his defeat to please them and by coaxing, used to give chance to them.'

खेलत संग अनुज बालक नित जोगवत अनट अपाउ ।

जीति हारि चुचुकारि दुलारत देत दिवावत दाउ ॥

Shri Ram used to dine, play and sleep with all His three brothers. Shri Ram, Lakshman accompanied Vishwamitraji to the forest to protect his Yagya. Having attained the knowledge in the numberless spheres and having massacred the demons, both the brothers reached Janakpur with Muni. The breaking of the bow was done. Parashuramji came and being enraged, enquired about the name and address of who had broken the bow. Shri Ramji answered very humbly and Lakshmanji replied very boldly in acute words. Parashuramji got infuriated on the sharp words of Lakshmanji. He began to grind his teeth against him. Our heart is charmed to read that episode how cleverly Shri Ram supported his brother's behaviour and set an example of brotherhood love.

After then, the preparation of marriage was made, but after the victory in the Swayambar, Shri Ram did

not marry only Himself but calling Bharat and Shatrughna also and Lakshman was already with Him, He got the marriage of all his brothers ceremonised along with His own marriage.

After the marriage ceremony coming back to Ayodhya, all the four brothers began to live lovingly and began to charm others by their behaviour and conduct. After some time Bharat and Shatrughna went to their maternal home. Later on king Dasharath decided to coronate Shri Ram by the permission of sage Vasishtha and with the consent of the subjects. All around auspicious congratulatory words began to be exchanged and preparation started. Vasishthaji gave this happy news to Shri Ram. Who will not be happy to hear the news of his coronation? But Shri Ram was not pleased, with remorseful feelings He began to say—'Oh! How strange it is! We all brothers born together, dined, slept-played together, ceremonial rites of piercing the ears, initiation of sacred threads etc., were also performed together and all the four were married together, then, why should this kingdom be awarded to Me only, in our pious dynasty this unseemly practice is quite improper that only the eldest one barring the younger brothers is entitled to the royal throne—

जनमे एक संग सब भाई । भोजन सयन केलि लरिकाई ॥
करनबेध उपबीत बिआहा । संग संग सब भए उछाहा ॥
बिमल बंस यहु अनुचित एकू । बंधु बिहाइ बड़ेहि अभिषेकू ॥

Shri Ram considered it quite unjust and improper to accept the kingship alone. He had to agree to the

proposal of installation unwillingly to obey the order of His father. But in His mind He thought that He was simply following the practice, practically the kingship belonged to the brothers. Bharat and Shatrughna were not present at the moment, so Shri Ramji said to Lakshman—

सौमित्रे भुङ्क्ष्व भोगांस्त्वमिष्टान् राज्यफलानि च ।

जीवितं चापि राज्यं च त्वदर्थमभिकामये ॥

(Valmiki Ramayan, 2/4/44)

‘Enjoy you, O Lakṣmaṇa, the pleasures coveted by you as well as the rewards of sovereignty (religious merit and fame etc.). I desire to live and even to rule but for you.’

Just after this the screen of this drama changed. According to the desires of mother Kaikeyi, the installation converted to banishment. In the morning when Shri Ram was summoned through Sumant in Kaikeyi's palace by the consent of king Dasarath and He came to know about the boons of Kaikeyi, He expressed his great delight. He began to say—‘Mother! What is the difficulty here? I have only one regret in My mind—‘Why did his Majesty not speak to Myself for the installation of Bharat?—

गच्छन्तु चैवानयितुं दूताः शीघ्रजवैर्हयैः ।

भरतं मातुलकुलादद्यैव नृपशासनात् ॥

दण्डकारण्यमेषोऽहं गच्छाम्येव हि सत्वरः ।

अविचार्य पितुर्वाक्यं समा वस्तुं चतुर्दश ॥

(Valmiki Ramayan, 2/19/10-11)

‘Nay, let messengers proceed this very day on

horses possessing a swift speed under orders of the king in order to bring Bharata from his maternal uncle's home. Here do I actually proceed with quick steps without fail to the Daṇḍaka forest in order to live there for fourteen years, without calling in question the command of my father.' What more pleasure for Me is possible if My heart-loving brother Bharat is coronated? Destiny is today favourable to me in all ways—

भरतु प्रानप्रिय पावहिं राजू । बिधि सब बिधि मोहि सनमुख आजू ॥
जौं न जाउँ बन ऐसेहु काजा । प्रथम गनिअ मोहि मूढ़ समाजा ॥

'Again Bharat, who is dear to me as life, will get the kingdom: God is propitious to me in every respect today. If I refuse to proceed to the woods even under such situation, I should be reckoned foremost in an assembly of fools.'

What an excellent example of sacrifice! From the start to the end, the lure of royal kingdom is invisible and always prompt for the entire sacrifice for the sake of the brothers! This context teaches us the lesson that exempting the younger brothers, the kingship, wealth and comforts should not be enjoyed only by oneself. On the ground of merit, if it is mandatory to accept, the share of the brothers should be considered more but it should be kept in mind that I accept it for their sake merely and if any such opportunity comes when I have to sacrifice because the brothers will be the gainer of kingship, wealth and enjoyments, it should be the matter of great pleasure.

After that Shri Ram went to His mother Kausalya and wife, Sita to bid adieu. Shri Ram used not even

a single vulgar or hostile word for Bharat or for Kaikeyi but said to Sita—

वन्दितव्याश्च ते नित्यं याः शेषा मम मातरः ।
 स्नेहप्रणयसम्भोगैः समा हि मम मातरः ॥
 भ्रातृपुत्रसमौ चापि द्रष्टव्यौ च विशेषतः ।
 त्वया भरतशत्रुघ्नौ प्राणैः प्रियतरौ मम ॥

(Valmiki Ramayan, 2/26/32-33)

‘Those others too who are related to me as mothers deserve to be saluted by you everyday since all mothers are equal in my eyes in point of affection and goodwill they cherish for me and the way in which they have looked after me when I was a child. My brothers, Bharata and Śatrughna too, who are dearer to me than life, should be particularly regarded by you as your own brothers or sons. ’

Here, Shri Ram had to grant permission to Sitaji also on the special insistence and her love, then, Lakshmanji also willed to accompany Him. Ram was not such a man who would say or instigate Lakshman to follow Him for His own comforts that—‘What will you do to remain in such an unjust domain, You, too, follow me.’ He persuaded Lakshman to His best to stay there at Ayodhya, He adopted many means and tried to convince Lakshman to stay in Ayodhya, so that he might look after the royal affairs and Lakshman might not suffer the ordeals of the woods; but when Lakshman did not agree to desist from his determination in spite of His all efforts then ultimately, Shri Ram agreed to take Lakshman with Him for his pleasure sake.

Shri Ram along with Lakshman and Sita set out for the forest. While dwelling in the woods, Lakshmanji

remains dedicated in the service of Shri Ram and Sita by all means and Shri Ram too, does and says only what may bring pleasure to brother Lakshman and Sitaji.

सीय लखन जेहि बिधि सुखु लहहीं । सोइ रघुनाथ करहिं सोइ कहहीं ॥
जोगवहिं प्रभु सिय लखनहि कैसें । पलक बिलोचन गोलक जैसें ॥

Let us take lesson that we should behave in the way as may cause pleasure to the younger brother and wife and guard them like the eyelashes protect the eye-ball.

xxx

xxx

xxx

Hearing about Bharat's coming to the forest along with his army, being enraged due to his deep love for Ram, Lakshman came to utter unworthy words against Bharat, then, Shri Ram said in praise of Bharat—
'Brother! Why do you talk of killing Bharat; I don't want the riches by destroying my kinsmen, that is like the poisonous food—

धर्ममर्थं च कामं च पृथिवीं चापि लक्ष्मण ।
इच्छामि भवतामर्थे एतत्प्रतिश्रृणोमि ते ॥
भ्रातृणां संग्रहार्थं च सुखार्थं चापि लक्ष्मण ।
राज्यमप्यहमिच्छामि सत्येनायुधमालभे ॥
यद्विना भरतं त्वां च शत्रुघ्नं वापि मानद ।
भवेन्मम सुखं किञ्चिद्भस्म तत्कुरुतां शिखी ॥
मन्येऽहमागतोऽयोध्यां भरतो भ्रातृवत्सलः ।
मम प्राणैः प्रियतरः कुलधर्ममनुस्मरन् ॥
श्रुत्वा प्रव्राजितं मां हि जटावल्कलधारिणम् ।
जानक्या सहितं वीर त्वया च पुरुषोत्तम ॥
स्नेहेनाक्रान्तहृदयः शोकेनाकुलितेन्द्रियः ।
द्रष्टुमभ्यागतो ह्येष भरतो नान्यथाऽऽगतः ॥

अम्बां च केकयीं रुष्य भरतश्चाप्रियं वदन्।

प्रसाद्य पितरं श्रीमान् राज्यं मे दातुमागतः॥

(Valmiki Ramayan, 2/97/5-6 & 8—12)

'O Lakshman! I seek virtue, fortune, gratification of senses and even sovereignty of the earth, O Lakṣmana, only for you people, my brothers, and not for any personal gain: I give this word of honour to you. I seek sovereignty too only for the protection and gratification of my brothers, O Lakṣmaṇa: I swear by my bow. If any joy comes to me without Bharata and yourself, or even without Śatrughna, O respecter of others, let fire reduce it to ashes. I believe, O gallant brother, that hearing, when back in Ayodhyā, of myself having been actually exiled with Sītā (daughter of Janaka) and yourself, and having proceeded to the forest, wearing matted locks and clad in the bark of trees, O jewel among men, Bharata, who is so fond of his brothers, and is dearer to me than life itself, must have found his heart overwhelmed with affection and his mind distracted through grief and he has surely come all the way to see me, bearing in mind the usage of his race in the shape of installing the eldest son on the throne on the death of a king and that the said Bharata has not come with any other motive. Nay, getting angry with mother Kaikeyī and speaking unkind words to her and having obtained the consent of our father, the glorious Bharata has evidently come to offer the throne to me. He can not even think in his mind of the conduct against us. If you are desirous of the kingdom, I will convince Bharat to hand over it to you. You are misunderstanding, Bharat, Bharat can never be proud of the kingship—

सुनहु लखन भल भरत सरीसा । बिधि प्रपंच महँ सुना न दीसा ॥

भरतहि होइ न राजमदु बिधि हरि हर पद पाइ ।

कबहुँ कि काँजी सीकरनि छीरसिंधु बिनसाइ ॥

लखन तुम्हार सपथ पितु आना । सुचि सुबंधु नहिं भरत समाना ॥

सगुनु खीरु अवगुन जलु ताता । मिलइ रचइ परपंचु बिधाता ॥

भरतु हंस रबिबंस तड़ागा । जनमि कीन्ह गुन दोष बिभागा ॥

गहि गुन पय तजि अवगुन बारी । निज जस जगत कीन्ह उजिआरी ॥

कहत भरत गुन सीलु सुभाऊ । पेम पयोधि मगन रघुराऊ ॥

‘As for Bharat I tell you, Lakshman, in the whole of God’s creation I have never seen or heard of anyone so good as he.

Bharat would never be intoxicated with sovereign power even if he attained to the position of Brahma; Vishnu or Shiva. What! Can a few drops of Kaji (a sour and savoury object) ever split the ocean of milk? ‘O brother Lakshman! I swear by you as well as by father that there is no brother so pure and virtuous as Bharat. God, dear brother, creates the world by mixing the milk of goodness with the water of evil, while Bharat is a swan, born in the lake of the solar race, that has sifted goodness from evil. Choosing the milk of goodness and discarding the water of evil he has illumined the world by his glory. Even as the Lord of Raghus extolled Bharat’s virtues, amiability and noble disposition. He was drowned in an ocean of love.

While extolling the virtues of Bharat Shri Ram was drowned in the ocean of love. Lakshman realised his mistake. Here, whatever didactic and sharp words full of love, Lord Shri Ram said to Lakshman, the three motives should be taken in consideration. First to prove his great confidence in Bharat: the second, to give

warning to Lakshman—'Why are you talking so like a child in the intoxication of My love deliberately even when you are well acquainted with the simplicity, love an sacrifice of Bharat?' Thirdly, scolding him to save him from moving towards wrong path.

Bharat came and uttering the words—'O my Lord! Save me; he fell flat on the ground like a log. Simple Lakshman having recognised Bharat's voice, saw him saluting Shri Ram's feet, the emotional feeling of brotherhood surged in his heart, but the duty of service was overwhelming. Lakshmanji eagerly desired to embrace his brother Bharat, then, again he became alert of his duty and remains stood in Lord Shri Ram's service.

मिलि न जाइ नहिं गुदरत बनई । सुकबिलखन मन की गति भनई ॥
रहे राखि सेवा पर भारू । चढ़ी चंग जनु खैंच खेलारू ॥

'He was, therefore, neither able to meet his brother (Bharat) nor ignore him; some good poet alone could describe Lakshman's state of mind. He threw his whole weight on the side of service and remained where he was, even as a kite-flier would pull against a kite that has risen high in the air.'

Ultimately he thought it proper to continue himself in the service but he could not restrain himself without submitting to Shri Ram and bowing his head on the ground he lovingly said—

भरत प्रनाम करत रघुनाथा ॥

'Bharat is making obeisance to you.'

Hearing the name of Bharat the Lord good overwhelmed with emotion and being impatient due to love stood up to embrace him. What was the condition of Shri Ram at that moment—

उठे राम सुनि पेम अधीरा । कहूँ पट कहूँ निषंग धनु तीरा ॥
 बरबस लिए उठाइ उर लाए कृपानिधान ।
 भरत राम की मिलनि लखि बिसरे सबहि अपान ॥

'Overwhelmed with emotion Shri Ram started up as soon as He heard this. His robe flying in one direction and His quiver bow and arrows in another.

The all compassionate Lord perforce lifted Bharat and clasped him to His bosom. Everyone who witnessed the meeting Bharat and Shri Ram lost all self-consciousness.'

All were charmed to see the mutual love of all the four brothers. Those who witnessed Bharat's humility, meekness, saintliness and devotion to Ram, lost their self consciousness. Shri Ram was greatly shocked to hear the news of His father's death. After performing the rites according to Shastras there was an assembly. Bharat urged Shri Ram to accept the kingship by different means. The sages like Vashistha and others, the ministers, the inhabitants and mothers even supported Bharat's version. When Shri Ram did not agree despite all efforts, Bharatji said then—'I will give up my life keeping fast.' Then, first, Shri Ram rebuked him for squatting and then persuading him in different ways, He pacified him and in the last, drawing Bharat lying on His feet in tears, He seated him in His lap and began to say affectionately—

'O Bharat! It is but natural to have the mind that you concluded to install Me after getting me back from the exile, this is the fruit of humility and wisdom attained by the preceptor's service. Because of this

supreme wisdom, You are capable to sustain the entire earth; but—

लक्ष्मीश्चन्द्रादपेयाद्वा हिमवान्वा हिमं त्यजेत्।

अतीयात्सागरो वेलां न प्रतिज्ञामहं पितुः॥

(Valmiki Ramayan, 2/112/18)

‘Splendour would sooner depart from the moon, nay, the Himalaya mountain would sooner shed its snow and the ocean would sooner transgress its limits than I shall violate the plighted word of my father.’

Gosaiji has written that being overwhelmed by love at last Shri Ram said to Bharat—

‘Brother! Don’t be agonised, the life of living being is under God’s control. O brother! As I understand all the auspicious persons of all the three worlds and all the three tenses are inferior to you. Anyone who considers you malevolent even in a dream, will be ruined in this world as well as in the next. Only those persons will blame mother Kaikeyi, who have not waited neither on the Guru and her sages. The Lord Shiva is witness of what I say, My brother, this earth is being sustained by you. Don’t have suspicion even in your mind. O My dear! Mark; the Maharaj (His majesty Dasharath) gave Me up, he abandoned his body out of My love and kept his promise and he didn’t deviate from truth. So, I am much perturbed in violating his words, but hesitation for you is stronger than his, this is supported by Guruji also. So, the everything is now on you, I am ready to do whatever you say—

मनु प्रसन्न करि सकुच तजि कहहु करौं सोइ आजु।

सत्यसंध रघुबर बचन सुनि भा सुखी समाजु॥

‘With a cheerful heart and shaking off all scruple,

till me what to do; and I will accomplish it this very day. The assembly rejoiced to hear these words of Śrī Rāma, the glory of Raghus, who was ever true do.'

What more brotherhood-love can be possible than this? The truth for the sake of which even the mother and father were disregarded and the same truth has been discarded for the sake of Bharat's love who has come to take away back to Him.'

Bharat, too, was the brother of the same Shri Ram. Feeling the weight of Shri Ram's love on him, he did not consider it proper to put Him in hesitation and said—

जो सेवकु साहिबहि सँकोची । निज हित चहइ तासु मति पोची ॥

A servant who seeks his own gain by placing his master in an embarrassing situation is a mean minded fellow.' I had brought with me, duly arranged, all the requisites for the coronation ceremony but now—

प्रभु प्रसन्न मन सकुच तजि जो जेहि आयसु देब ।

सो सिर धरि धरि करिहि सबु मिटिहि अनट अवरेब ॥

'Each one of us will follow reverently carry out the orders that the Lord may be pleased to give with a cheerful heart and without reserve; and all agitation of mind and imbroglio will end.' In the last, Shri Ram said again—'Brother! You are pious in Your mind speech and action, it is you only your compeer. How to recount the virtues of the younger brother before the elders at this inopportune time? 'Brother! You are conversant with the customs and tradition of your solar race and father's repute and love and so many all other things are in your knowledge. You are sure to suffer for fourteen years—

जानि तुम्हहि मृदु कहउँ कठोरा । कुसमयँ तात न अनुचित मोरा ।
होहिँ कुठायँ सुबंधु सहाए । ओड़िअहिँ हाथ असनिहु के घाए ॥

'I know you to be tender-hearted, yet am speaking harsh words to you; but the time is so that this will not be unjustifiable on my part, in bad times good brothers alone stand one in good stead, it is by one's arms alone that one parries the strokes even of a thunderbolt.'

Just hearing these loving mystreous words of the Lord Shri Ram, Bharat understood his intention very well. He became devoid of his sorrow; but how to pass fourteen years without any supporting pillar? So,—
सो अवलंब देव मोहि देई । अवधि पारु पावौं जेहि सेई ॥

'Pray vouchsafe to me, good sir, some tangible support by serving which I may be enabled to reach the end of the term of your exile.

At the very moment, to fulfil Bharat's desire the Lord handed over the wooden sandal of His feet to the lustrous saint Bharat. Having saluted His wooden sandal and placing it on his head, Bharat returned to Ayodhya.

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Shri Ram made His stay at Chitrakut for some days, then wandering about in the hermitages of the sages, He came to Panchvati. There, He passed some days. While staying in the woods, the Lord used to give sermon on different kinds of subjects such as knowledge, devotion and dispassion to Lakshmanji. While preaching sermons one day, He said—

संत चरन पंकज अति प्रेमा । मन क्रम बचन भजन दृढ़ नेमा ॥
गुरु पितु मातु बंधु पति देवा । सब मोहि कहँ जानै दृढ़ सेवा ॥

मम गुण गावत पुलकसरीरा । गदगद गिरा नयन बह नीरा ॥
 काम आदि मद दंभ नजाकें । तात निरंतर बस मैं ताकें ॥
 बचन कर्म मन मोरि गति भजनु करहिं निःकाम ।
 तिन्ह के हृदय कमल महुँ करउँ सदा बिश्राम ॥

‘One should be extremely devoted to the lotus feet of saints and should be persistent in the practice of adoration through mind, speech and action. He should recognise Me as his preceptor, father, mother, kinsman, lord, deity and all and should be steadfast in My service. A thrill runs through his body as he sings My praises; his voice gets choked and his eyes flow with tears; he is free from lust and other vices, Pride and hypocrisy. I am ever at the back and call of such a devotee.

Nay, I ever repose in the lotus heart of those who depend on Me in thought, word and deed and who worship Me in a disinterested way.’

Thus, the time passed in the discussion of the fundamental truth and the matters of great mystery. He had so much love for His brother that Shri Ram made him understand His mystery open heartedly. Sita was kidnapped, attack was made on Lanka, and fierce war broke out. One day Lakshman was injured by ‘Javelin’ (an arrow with special potency). How the Lord Shri Ram displayed the frolicsome activity of lamentation, and prattle indicates what a deep love Shri Ram had for his younger brother Lakshman. Shri Ram began to say—

किं मे युद्धेन किं प्राणैर्युद्धकार्यं न विद्यते ।
 यत्रायं निहतः शेते रणमूर्धनि लक्ष्मणः ॥

यथैव मां वनं यान्तमनुयाति महाद्युतिः ।
अहमप्यनुयास्यामि तथैवैनं यमक्षयम् ॥

(Valmiki. 6/101/12-13)

“What purpose of mine will be served by fighting or even by life? I have no use for the war as a result of which Lakṣmaṇa lies killed in the forefront of battle here? Even as Lakṣmaṇa, who is endowed with extraordinary splendour, followed me when I retired to the forest, I, too, shall likewise follow him to the abode of Death.’ Gosaiji writes—Shri Ram utters in lamentation—

सकहु न दुखित देखि मोहि काऊ । बंधु सदा तव मृदुल सुभाऊ ॥
मम हित लागि तजेहु पितु माता । सहेहु बिपिन हिम आतप बाता ॥
सो अनुराग कहाँ अब भाई । उठहु न सुनि मम बच बिकलाई ॥
जौं जनतेउँ बन बंधु बिछोहू । पिता बचन मनतेउँ नहि ओहू ॥
सुत बित नारि भवन परिवारा । होहिं जाहिं जग बारहिं बारा ॥
अस बिचारि जियँ जागहु ताता । मिलइ न जगत सहोदर भ्राता ॥
जथा पंख बिनु खग अति दीना । मनि बिनु फनि करिबर कर हीना ॥
अस मम जिवन बंधु बिनु तोही । जौं जड़ दैव जिआवै मोही ॥
जैहउँ अवध कवन मुहु लाई । नारि हेतु प्रिय भाइ गँवाई ॥
अब अपलोकु सोकु सुत तोरा । सहिहि निठुर कठोर उर मोरा ॥
निज जननी के एक कुमारा । तात तासु तुम्ह प्रान अधारा ॥
साँपेसि मोहि तुम्हहि गहि पानी । सब बिधि सुखद परम हित जानी ॥
उतरु काह दैहउँ तेहि जाई । उठि किन मोहि सिखावहु भाई ॥
बहु बिधि सोचत सोच बिमोचन । स्रवत सलिल राजिव दल लोचन ॥*

‘Brother! You could never bear to see me in

* This lamentation is considered the sportive activity of Shri Ram. In the lamentation, it is natural to utter beyond the reality. ‘प्रभु प्रलाप सुनि कान’ this sentence, too, proves lamentation. Lord Shiv’s these words.

distress, since your disposition has always been so tender. On my account you left both father and mother and exposed yourself to the cold, the heat and the winds of the forest. Where is that old love now, brother, that you refuse to get up even on hearing my lament? Had I known that I would lose my brother in the forest, I would have never obeyed even my father's command. Sons, riches, wives, houses and kinsfolk in this world repeatedly come and go; but a real brother can not be had again in this world. Ponder this in your mind and arise, dear brother. As a bird is utterly miserable without wings, a serpent without its head jewel and noble elephant without its trunk, so is my life without you, brother in case, stupid fate compels me to survive. With what face shall I return to Ayodhya after sacrificing a beloved brother for the sake of my wife. I would rather have suffered abloquy in the world (for my inability to recover my wife); for after all the loss of a wife is not a serious loss. Now, however, my unfeeling and stony heart will endure both that obloquy and the deep anguish of your loss, my son. Your mother's only son, you are the sole prop of her life. Yet she took you by the hand and entrusted you to me, knowing that I would make you happy in every way and that I am your greatest well-wisher. What answer shall I give her when I go back? Why should you not get up and advise me brother? Thus lamented the Dispeller of sorrow in diverse ways; and tears flowed from His eyes which resembled the petals of lotus.'

It is proper definitely to lament for the brother who is ready to sacrifice his life for His sake, but Shri Ram

has presented a good lesson of the love for His brother going beyond the limit of lamentation.

After getting the Sanjivani brought by Shri Hanumanji, Lakshmanji became quite well. The Ram-Ravan battle was over. After the test of Sita, Shri Ram is in the preparation of coming back to Ayodhya along with all his companions by Pushpak Viman. At the very moment Vibhishan began to urge—

‘Lord! If I deserve Your grace, if I am Your affectionate, kindly accept my prayer—please, stay here for some days, I want to adore You along with Lakshman and Sita. Sanctify my house to visit there, You, yourself and all the army men including your hosts and oblige me to accept my meagre cordial reception. It is not my command to You but it is my ambition based on Your affection and love and friendship as a servant I want to please You. (Valmiki. 6/121/12—15)

What a means of humility to learn a lesson! Shri Ram said in reply—

न खल्वेतन्न कुर्यां ते वचनं राक्षसेश्वर।
तं तु मे भ्रातरं द्रष्टुं भरतं त्वरते मनः॥
मां निवर्तयितुं योऽसौ चित्रकूटमुपागतः।
शिरसा याचतो यस्य वचनं न कृतं मया॥

(Valmiki Ramayan, 6/121/18-19)

‘Nevertheless I would never dare to turn down this request of yours either, O ruler of ogres! My mind, however, is impatient to see Bharata, that younger brother of mine, who came all the way to Citrakūṭa to take me back to Ayodhyā the other day, yet whose prayer was not granted by me. Friend! don’t feel anguished on my this prayer.’

तोर कोस गृह मोर सब सत्य बचन सुनु भात ।
 भरत दसा सुमिरत मोहि निमिष कल्प सम जात ॥
 तापस बेष गात कृस जपत निरंतर मोहि ।
 देखौं बेगि सो जतनु करु सखा निहोरउँ तोहि ॥
 बीतैं अवधि जाउँ जौं जिअत न पावउँ बीर ।
 सुमिरत अनुज प्रीति प्रभु पुनि पुनि पुलक सरीर ॥

'Listen, brother; what you say is quite true; your treasury and palaces are all My own. But when I recollect Bharat's condition, every moment that passes, seems an age to Me. Clad in the robes of a hermit, with wasted body he constantly repeats My name. Therefore, take steps, My friend! I beseech you, that I may soon be able to see him again. If on the other hand, I reach there on the expiry of the term of My exile, I do not expect to find My brother alive. And even as the Lord recalled His brother's affection, He felt a thrill all over His body again and again.'

Vibhishan could not check Him, He started for by His plane. The Lord comforted Bharat by sending the message of His arrival to Bharat earlier through Hanuman.

Then after, the infinitely powerful, the Lord Shri Ram, having reached Ayodhya and by His sportive activity, met with the all in a moment.

प्रेमातुर सब लोग निहारी । कौतुक कीन्ह कृपाल खरारी ॥
 अमित रूप प्रगटे तेहि काला । जथा जोग मिले सबहि कृपाला ॥
 कृपादृष्टि रघुबीर बिलोकी । किए सकल नर नारि बिसोकी ॥
 छन महि सबहि मिले भगवाना । उमा मरम यह काहुँ न जाना ॥

'Seeing all the people impatient in their love to meet the Lord, the All-merciful Śrī Rāma, Slayer of

Khara, wrought a miracle. He forthwith appeared in countless forms and in this way the gracious Lord met everybody at one and the same time in an appropriate manner. Śrī Raghuvīra rid all men and women of their sorrow by casting His benign look on them. In a moment the Lord greeted them all; Umā, this was a mystery which none could realize.'

Bharat's meeting with the Lord is unprecedentedly blissful. Then, He rid the Shatrughna's sorrow of separation by meeting him. The preparation of coronation was made. The bathing started. Shri Ram, too, began to serve His brothers affectionately. Bharatji was called, Shri Ram distangled his matted hair with his own hands. Then, Shri Ram with His own hands got His three brothers as dear as life bathed by rubbing their body. Bharat, Lakshman, Shatrughna were charmed with this affectionate fatherly treatment of Shri Ram.

पुनि करुनानिधि भरतु हँकारे । निज कर राम जटा निरुआरे ॥
 अन्हवाए प्रभु तीनिउ भाई । भगत बछ्ल कृपाल रघुराई ॥
 भरत भाग्य प्रभु कोमलताई । सेष कोटि सत सकहिं न गाई ॥

'Then All merciful Ram next called Bharat and disentangled his matted hair with His own hands. The gracious and almighty Lord of the Raghus, who is so fond of His devotees, now bathed all His three brothers. The blessedness of Bharat and the Lord's tenderness were both more than countless Sheshas could sing.'

Shivji says that the blessedness of Bharat (and other brothers) and the Lord's tenderness both, crores of Sheshas could not sing. A peerless brotherhood-love!

Lord Shri Ram attended by His three brothers, began to reign. Who can sing the praise of Ram-Rajya? From time to time Shri Ram called the meeting of His subjects and preached them the sermons for the exaltation of this life here in this world and the next world and about the means of the highest good. Till now, such a just and merciful reign, a good and noble treatment, loving attitude, to give the lessons to make life comfortable in this world and the next world and attain deliverance and pleasures in all respects have been neither seen nor heard nor read.

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From time to time, Shri Ram goes to the orchards and woods along with His brothers, gives them instinctive teachings of different kinds. Once, all went to the orchard. Bharatji spread his scarf on the ground for Shri Ram, the Lord got himself seated on this, then on the question of Bharatji through Hanumanji, Shri Ram, in the last while distinguishing the qualities of the good and the wicked, gave a fine sermon—

पर हित सरिस धर्म नहिं भाई । पर पीड़ा सम नहिं अधमाई ॥
 निर्णय सकल पुरान बेद कर । कहेउँ तात जानहिं कोबिद नर ॥
 नर सरीर धरि जे पर पीरा । करहिं ते सहहिं महा भव भीरा ॥
 करहिं मोह बस नर अघ नाना । स्वारथ रत परलोक नसाना ॥
 कालरूप तिन्ह कहँ मैं भ्राता । सुभ अरु असुभ कर्म फल दाता ॥
 अस बिचारि जे परम सयाने । भजहिं मोहि संसृत दुख जाने ॥
 त्यागहिं कर्म सुभासुभ दायक । भजहिं मोहि सुर नर मुनि नायक ॥

‘Brother! There is no virtue like benevolence and no meanness like oppressing others. I have declared to you, dear brother, the vendict of all the Vedas and

Puranas; the wise also know it. They who inflict pain on others even after attaining this body have to suffer the terrible pangs of birth and death. Dominated by the infatuation and devoted to their selfish interest, men commit various sins and thereby ruin their prospects in the next world. Figuring as Yama, the terrible (the god of death) for their sake, O brother, as I dispense the fruit of their good and evil actions. Realizing this, those who are supremely intelligent adore Me, knowing the cycle of births and deaths as full of pain.'

What a worth imitating sermon by all is this Such an elder brother is available as a result of countless auspicious deeds.

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Later on, on the request of Shatrughna, Shri Ram permitted him to go to the battlefield to kill Lavanasur and said—'You will have to enjoy the kingship there. You will not disobey Me.' Shatrughna felt displeased hearing his coronation very much; but he had to accept it considering it the order of Shri Ram. This is the act of an elder brother only like Ram to provide the royal comforts to His unwilling brother by keeping him under his words.

Then after the question of Ram's abandonment of Lakshman arises, some take it as Ram's cruel decision for him. The brother, who had saved the kingdom and the king from the harsh curse of the sage, deserving to get a reward, he should back out of his previous vow? But those who comment so, forget that Shri Ram is bound by truth. Only to abiding the truth

He abandoned Lakshman. But just after the separation of His dear brother Lakshman, He, Himself along with Bharat, Shatrughna, subjects and kinsmen departed for the Supreme abode.

This is a very brief description of Shri Ram's brotherhood-love. It can give you an idea of Ram's affection to His brothers. We should take rightful lessons. Ram's ideal loving behaviour with his brothers to accept the kingdom for the sake of his brothers, surrendering His own right of sovereignty delightfully, to remain devoted to Kaikeyi, the mother of the brother Bharat who became the hurdle in His coronation, to praise the virtues of Bharat, to save His brother from the immoral path by rebuking Bharat on squatting and Lakshman on his anger, on Bharat, to be ready to deviate from His vow of truth on the will of Bharat, to become prepared for the sacrifice of His own life with him at the time of Lakshman being struck by Javelin to give sermons from time to time, to love all unconditionally in a selfless spirit, and to persuade forcibly to Shatrughna to accept his coronation at the time of attack on Lawanasur etc.



Shri Bharat's Brotherhood-Love

सिय राम प्रेम पियूष पूरन होत जनमु न भरत को ।
मुनि मन अगम जम नियम सम दम बिषम ब्रत आचरत को ॥
दुख दाह दारिद दंभ दूषन सुजस मिस अपहरत को ।
कलिकाल तुलसी से सठन्हि हठि राम सनमुख करत को ॥

'If Bharat, who brimmed over with the nectar of devotion to Sita and Shri Ram, had never been born, who would have practised the difficult vow of self—abnegation and austerity and control of the mind and senses, that transcended the imagination even of sages? Who would have dispelled the woes, burning agony, poverty, hypocrisy and other evils of the world through his fair renown; and who in this Kali age would have forcibly diverted the mind of villains like Tulasidas towards Shri Rama?'

Bharatji's glory is boundless. In the whole Ramayan it is such a bright character of Bharatji only which is spotless from all point of views. Bharatji was the knower of righteousness, well versed in ethics, renunciant, virtuous, self-restrained, ideal of good conduct, an idol of love and humility endowed with devotion and very wise and intelligent. In his character there was an excellent abundance of dispassion, truth, penance, forgiveness, endurance, compassion, affection, patience, peace, simplicity, serenity, modesty, equality, absence of pride, mildness, sweetness, dutifulness, selfless-

friendliness and service of the master and other virtues. As regards the brotherhood-love, he was as if its manifested form. Shri Ram's banishment proved quite good as it revealed Bharat's unique feeling of love in the universe. If Ram's separation had not happened, the whole world would have not availed the opportunity to take the dip in the immense nectarial current of love.

पेम अमिअ मंदरु बिरहु भरतु पयोधि गँभीर।

मथि प्रगटेउ सुर साधु हित कृपासिंधु रघुबीर॥

'For the sake of gods and the saints, the ocean of mercy Rama, extracted this nectar of love by churning the unfathomable depths of Bharat's soul; and it was separation from Him which stood for Mount Mandaras (that served as a churning-stick)

After the banishment of Shri Ram and on the death of Dasharathji, the Guru Vasishtha sends envoy to Kekayadesh for bringing Shatrughna and Bharat. On the otherside, Bharata becomes perturbed by the bad dream and does charity for the welfare of mother-father, and brothers and their wives. The envoys conveyed the message of the preceptor. Bharatji asked about the welfare and the messengers also said as if ironically in reply—'They are well about whom you want to know.' Bharatji sallied forth the same day. He felt very sad to see Ayodhya deprived of glow. His mind got suspicious of some untoward happening in the family. He neither dared to ask anyone nor did anybody utter anything. At that moment the people looked Bharat with disdainful eyes to consider him the

cause of Ram's banishment and father's death; then, where was the question to talk to him properly? Later on, the subjects made it clear—

मिथ्याप्रव्राजितो रामः सभार्यः सहलक्ष्मणः ।
भरते संनिबद्धाः स्मः सौनिके पशवो यथा ॥

(Valmiki Ramayan, 2/48/28)

'Śrī Rāma, alongwith his consort, Sītā, and with Lakṣmaṇa, his younger brother, has been deceitfully sent into exile and we have been tied firm to the apron-strings of Bharata in the same way as animals are bound tightly together (for being slaughtered) in a shambles.'

पुरजन मिलहिं न कहहिं कछु गवँहिं जोहारहिं जाहिं ।
भरत कुसल पूँछि न सकहिं भय बिषाद मन माहिं ॥

'The citizen met him but spoke not a word; they made obeisance and quietly passed on His mind being obsessed with tear and grief.'

Being disturbed Bharat reached the palace of Kaikeyi and began to ask—'Where is father?' Kaikeyi's joys had no bound on her doing; She thought that Bharat would also support her action; so she took no time to say becoming hard-hearted—

या गतिः सर्वभूतानां तां गतिं ते पिता गतः ।
राजा महात्मा तेजस्वी यायजूकः सतां गतिः ॥

(Valmiki Ramayan, 2/72/15)

'The high-souled and glorious king, your father, who was given to the performance of sacrifices and was the haven of the virtuous, has met the same fate as is the destined end of all created beings.'

Being greatly shocked just listening it Bharat screamed—‘Oh! I was murdered and fell down on the ground at once. Lamenting in many ways he began to say, ‘O father! Where did you go away leaving me here in the ocean of sorrow—

असमर्प्यैव रामाय राज्ञे मां क्व गतोऽसि भोः ।

(Adhyatma Ramayan, 2/7/67)

‘O father! Where did you go away without handing over me to the hands of the king, Ram? Kaikeyi lifted up lamenting Bharat and wiped his tears and said—‘Son! Have patience, I have settled every thing in your favour’—‘समाश्वसिहि भद्रं ते सर्वं सम्पादितं मया ।’ (Adhyatma Ramayan 2/7/65). But Bharat’s lamentation was not over; he said—

यो मे भ्राता पिता बन्धुर्यस्य दासोऽस्मि सम्मतः ।
तस्य मां शीघ्रमाख्याहि रामस्याक्लिष्टकर्मणः ॥
पिता हि भवति ज्येष्ठो धर्ममार्यस्य जानतः ।
तस्य पादौ ग्रहीष्यामि स हीदानीं गतिर्मम ॥
धर्मविद्धर्मशीलश्च महाभागो दृढव्रतः ।
आर्ये किमब्रवीद्राजा पिता मे सत्यविक्रमः ॥
पश्चिमः साधुसंदेशमिच्छामि श्रोतुमात्मनः ।

(Valmiki Ramayan, 2/72/32—35)

‘Pray, announce me soon to Śrī Rāma, who is unwearied in action, nay, who is my elder brother, father in the absence of the Emperor and friend, all in one, and whose beloved servant I am. To a worthy man knowing what is right, an elder brother is a virtual father. I shall, clasp his feet as a mark of respect since he is my support now. What did the king, my father, of firm resolve and unfailing prowess—who knew what is right, had a

virtuous disposition and was highly fortunate—say to my elder brother at the last moment? I wish to hear his last kind message for me.' In reply Kaikeyi said—

रामेति राजा विलपन् हा सीते लक्ष्मणेति च ।
 स महात्मा परं लोकं गतो मतिमतां वरः ॥
 इतीमां पश्चिमां वाचं व्याजहार पिता तव ।
 कालधर्मं परिक्षिप्तः पाशैरिव महागजः ॥
 सिद्धार्थास्तु नरा राममागतं सह सीतया ।
 लक्ष्मणं च महाबाहुं द्रक्ष्यन्ति पुनरागतम् ॥

(Valmiki Ramayan, 2/72/36—38)

'That high-souled monarch, the foremost among the wise, departed for the other world crying 'O Rāma, O Sītā, O Lakṣmaṇa! Bound by the laws of Time (according to which a living being meets his end at the appointed time), like a huge elephant bound with ropes, your father uttered the following parting words : Only those men who are able to behold Rāma returned with Sītā, as also the mighty-armed Lakṣmaṇa come back to Ayodhyā will have their object accomplished.'

On hearing this Bharat's sorrow was beyond the limit.

तामाह भरतो हेऽम्ब रामः सन्निहितो न किम् ।
 तदानीं लक्ष्मणो वापि सीता वा कुत्र ते गताः ॥

(Adhyatma Ramayan, 2/7/71)

Bharatji asked—'Mother! Was none of Shri Ramji, Lakshman and Sita, present at that moment? Where had they gone away?'

Now hard hearted Kaikeyi said narrating the entire occurrence—

रामस्य यौवराज्यार्थं पित्रा ते सम्भ्रमः कृतः ।
 तव राज्यप्रदानाय तदाऽहं विघ्नमाचरम् ॥
 राज्ञा दत्तं हि मे पूर्वं वरदेन वरद्वयम् ।
 याचितं तदिदानीं मे तयोरेकेन तेऽखिलम् ॥
 राज्यं रामस्य चैकेन वनवासो मुनिव्रतम् ।
 ततः सत्यपरो राजा राज्यं दत्त्वा तवैव हि ॥
 रामं सम्प्रेषयामास वनमेव पिता तव ।
 सीताप्यनुगता रामं पातिव्रत्यमुपाश्रिता ॥
 सौभ्रात्रं दर्शयन् राममनुयातोऽपि लक्ष्मणः ।
 वनं गतेषु सर्वेषु राजा तानेव चिन्तयन् ॥
 प्रलपन् रामरामेति ममार नृपसत्तमः ।

(Adhyatma Ramayan, 2/7/72)

'Your father had made great preparation for Ram's coronation, but I created obstacle with the motive of your coronation in place of Ram. The king had already granted me two boons and by the first boon I solicited the entire kingdom for you, and by the second boon I demanded Ram's banishment for fourteen years as an ascetic. Then, your truthful father granted the sovereignty to you and exiled Ram. The chaste Sita also accompanied Ram to the woods and following the path of true brotherhood, Lakshman also followed them. After their departure to the wood, the king also passed away being afflicted by the sorrow of their separation calling 'Ha Ram, ha Ram.'

These words of Kaikeyi proved to be thunderbolt to Bharat. He forgot his father's death.

भरतहि बिसरेउ पितु मरन सुनत राम बन गौनु ।

हेतु अपनपउ जानि जियँ थकित रहे धरि मौनु ॥

सुनि सुठि सहमेउ राजकुमारू । पाकें छत जनु लाग अँगारू ॥

'Hearing of Shri Ram's exile to the forest, Bharat forgot his father's death and realizing in his heart that he was the root of it, he remained mute and stupefied. The prince was utterly dismayed to hear these words as though a festering sore had been touched by a live coal.'

Bharatji became distressed and in the utter shock being ignorant of his own self cursing his mother and crying loudly he began to say—'O the cruel! You are my greatest enemy in the form of a mother desiring for the sovereignty, you are murderous of the husband and murderous of the family, you are not the daughter of virtuous Ashwapati, you are born in the form of an ogress to ruin his family line. Are you not acquainted with my feelings of love to Shri Ram, that is why you have done this injustice. Avoiding Ram and Lakshman on whose support will I reign? You committed the ruin of virtuous father and you have sent out my brother to beg in the streets and you have caused the sorrow of son's separation to Kausalya, the mother of the only son, may you go to hell! May you be deprived of the kingdom! O the wicked! You are morally fallen down, may God grant me death and you remain here to weep for me forever! I will surrender the entire kingdom for my brother, better you enter the fire. Retire to the forest or end your life by tying a cord round your neck. I too shall wash out the stain of my face by giving away the sovereignty to Ram only and accomplish my purpose.'

(Valmiki Ramayan 2/74)

Bharat, blind in Ram's love uttered to the extent to Shatrughna—

हन्यामहमिमां पापां कैकेयीं दुष्टचारिणीम्।
यदि मां धार्मिको रामो नासूयेन्मातृघातकम्॥

(Valmiki Ramayan, 2/78/22)

‘O brother! If myself would have slain this sinful Kaikeyī of vicious conduct had it not been for the fact that the pious Śrī Rāma is sure to get angry with me for my having killed my own mother.’

At last, Bharat considered sin even to see his mother's face and said—

जो हसि सो हसि मुहँ मसि लाई । आँखि ओट उठि बैठहि जाई॥

‘Whatever you may be, you had better bedaub your face with ink and leaving my presence move to some place out of my sight.’

In the meanwhile came the hunchbacked (Manthara) clad in a variety of rich costumes and adorned with ornaments. The very sight of that women filled Shatrughna with anger. He started giving her reward (by giving her the hard blow of a kick) but merciful Bharatji rescued her. Then, Bharatji called on mother Kausalya and to see her miserable condition he got afflicted. Kausalyaji, too, uttered a few harsh words suspecting Bharat. The unpleasant words of Kausalya burst open the heart of Bharat and he fell down on her feet being unconscious. When he came to his consciousness, he began to swear in such hard ways which melted the mother's heart. Bharat said—

कैकेय्या यत्कृतं कर्म रामराज्याभिषेचने।
अन्यद्वा यदि जानामि सा मया नोदिता यदि॥

पापं मेऽस्तु तदा मातर्ब्रह्महत्याशतोद्भवम् ।
हत्वा वसिष्ठं खड्गेन अरुन्धत्या समन्वितम् ॥

(Adhyatma Ramayan, 2/7/88-89)

'Mother! Whatever the foul game has been played by Kaikeyi regarding Shri Ram's coronation and His banishment, if there is my consent in it or even if I am aware of it, let me be the culprit of killing one hundred Brahmans and let me suffer the same consequences what is applied on killing the preceptor Vasishthaji's Arundhatiji with sword.'

Being overjoyed with emotion Kausalya seated innocent Bharat in her lap and having wiped his tears began to say—'Son! I blamed you in the bewilderment of sorrow. I know—

राम प्राणहु तें प्राण तुम्हारे । तुम्ह रघुपतिहि प्राणहु तें प्यारे ॥
बिधु बिष चवै स्रवै हिमु आगी । होइ बारिचर बारि बिरागी ॥
भाँँ ग्यानु बरु मिटै न मोहू । तुम्ह रामहि प्रतिकूल न होहू ॥
मत तुम्हार यहु जो जग कहहीं । सो सपनेहुँ सुख सुगति न लहहीं ॥
अस कहि मातु भरतु हियँ लाए । थन पय स्रवहिँ नयन जल छाए ॥

'Ram is dearer to you than your own life and likewise you are dearer to Shri Raghunath than his own life. The moon may defuse poison, (through her rays) and snow may emit fire; nay, an aquatic creature may shun water and spritual enlighteninent may fail to eradicate error; but in no case will you turn hostile to Ram. Those in this world allege this plot was contrived with your connivance, shall never attain happiness or salvation even in a dream. So saying mother Kausalya clasped Bharat to her bosom; milk began to flow from her breasts and her eyes filled with tears.'

Kausalya's these words are sufficient to indicate Bharat's love to Ram. It was the power of his noble character and perpetual conduct of brotherhood-love which even in this condition made Kausalya to give such a impressive certificate of his love to his brother Ram.

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Having performed the funeral ceremony of his father, as prescribed by the scriptures in the royal assembly the Guru, minister, subjects, his mothers and even Kausalya urged Bharat to accept the royal throne but Bharat did not agree on any account. He replied point blank—

आपनि दारुन दीनता कहउँ सबहि सिरु नाइ ।

देखें बिनु रघुनाथ पद जिय कै जरनि न जाइ ॥

आन उपाउ मोहि नहिं सूझा । को जिय कै रघुबर बिनु बूझा ॥

एकहिं आँक इहइ मन माहीं । प्रातकाल चलिहउँ प्रभु पाहीं ॥

जद्यपि मैं अनभल अपराधी । भै मोहि कारन सकल उपाधी ॥

तदपि सरन सनमुख मोहि देखी । छमि सब करिहहिं कृपा बिसेषी ॥

सील सकुच सुठि सरल सुभाऊ । कृपा सनेह सदन रघुराऊ ॥

अरिहुक अनभल कीन्ह न रामा । मैं सिसु सेवक जद्यपि बामा ॥

'Bowing my head to all I lay open my terrible distress before you. Unless I behold Shri Ram's feet, the agony of my heart shall not go. I find no other remedy. Who else than the chief of Raghus can know what passes in my heart? There is the only resolve in my mind; at daybreak I must proceed to meet the Lord. Even though I am a vile offender, am at the root of all troubles, yet when, the Lord finds me before him

in a suppliant mien he will forgive all my faults and shower his special grace on me. Shri Raghunath is an embodiment of amiability, meekness, extreme guilelessness of disposition, compassion and love. Shri Ram has never injured even an enemy, to say nothing of me a mere child and his servant too, though crooked.'

All were charmed to hear Bharat's speech. It was decided to go to the forest to get Ram's sight. All got ready to go. Who would remain in the house to be exempted from the sight of Ram?

जेहि राखहिं रहु घर रखवारी । सो जानइ जनु गरदनि मारी ॥
कोउ कह रहन कहिअ नहिं काहू । को न चहइ जग जीवन लाहू ॥

जरउ सो संपति सदन सुखु सुहृद मातु पितु भाइ ।

सनमुख होत जो राम पद करै न सहस सहाइ ॥

'Whomsoever they left behind saying 'you should stay behind to guard the house; felt as if he was smitten on the neck. Someone said, 'Nobody should be asked to remain behind; who in this world would not have the reward of his life?'

'Perish that property, house, happiness, friend, father, mother or brother, who does not gladly help one turn one's face towards Shri Ram's feet.'

Bharatji deputed the responsible and dutiful guards considering his duty to protect Lord Ram's property and the inhabitants of Ayodhya, men and women set out. At that time, nine thousand elephants, sixty thousand archers, one lakh horse riders were there with Bharat. In addition to it the chariots, the palanquins of the

mothers and female Brahmans and virtuous Brahmans and the workers and the bullock carts loaded with materials countless in number were also along with.

While going to the forest on the way Bharat thought to himself—‘Shri Ram, Sita and Lakshman roam about on naked foot from forest to forest and I am going to meet them by the means of transportation, curse to me!’ Considering so, Bharat and Shatrughna began to move on foot. To see the both brothers going on foot, the others were charmed and having dismounted from their vehicles they also began to follow them on foot—

देखि सनेहु लोग अनुरागे । उतरि चले हय गय रथ त्यागे ॥

‘Seeing their affection the people were overcome with emotion and dismounting, walked on foot leaving their horses, elephants and chariots.’

Seeing this the mother Kausalya making her palanquin reach near Bharat said in soft ascents—

तात चढ़हु रथ बलि महतारी । होइहि प्रिय परिवारु दुखारी ॥
तुम्हरे चलत चलिहि सबु लोगू । सकल सोक कृस नहिं मग जोगू ॥

‘I adjure you by my life to mount the chariot, dear child; or else all our near and dear ones will be put to trouble. If you walk on foot the whole party will follow suit and you know they are all wasted with sorrow and hardly fit to undertake the journey on foot.’

Reverently obeying her command Bharatji mounted his chariot. Going on the way the party reached Shringverpur. Here, the king of Nishads also felt suspicious of Bharat; but after test and seeing Bharat’s behaviour he engaged himself in Bharat’s service as

spell bound. Bharat's heart moved to see the place beneath the 'Ingudi tree' where Shri Ram had passed his night sleeping on the litter of Kusa grass shown by the Nishad king and his condition became strange. In different ways he began to lament—'Ha! Is this the bed of scattered leaves of the same Shri Ram 'who was used to dwell in the royal palace touching the sky in height? Has the Lord Ram already passed His night beneath this Ingudi tree, the same Lord whose palace is renowned for the flowers, paintings and sandals, the top of whose palace is the merry making place of the dancing birds and peacocks, whose golden walls are adorned with paintings? Oh! It is I the root of this misery?

हा हतोऽस्मि नृशंसोऽस्मि यत्सभार्यः कृते मम ।
 ईदृशीं राघवः शय्यामधिषेते ह्यनाथवत् ॥
 सार्वभौमकुले जातः सर्वलोकसुखावहः ।
 सर्वप्रियकरस्त्यक्त्वा राज्यं प्रियमनुत्तमम् ॥
 कथमिन्दीवरश्यामो रक्ताक्षः प्रियदर्शनः ।
 सुखभागी न दुःखार्हः शयितो भुवि राघवः ॥

(Valmiki Ramayan, 2/88/17—19)

'Alas, I am ruined. Cruel am I, in that on my account Śrī Rāma (a scion of Raghu) with his wife has to lie down on such a hard bed like a forlorn creature ! Relinquishing his beloved rulership, which is unsurpassed, how did Śrī Rāma (a scion of Raghu), born in a line of universal monarchs, who brings happiness to the whole world and does good to all, who is blue as a lotus, has reddish eyes and is pleasing of appearance and who is deserving

of happiness and unworthy of suffering, lie down on the ground?'

Then, Bharat saluted that litter of Kusa and circumambulated it—

कुस साँथरी निहारि सुहाई । कीन्ह प्रनामु प्रदच्छिन्न जाई ॥
चरन रेख रज आँखिन्ह लाई । बनइ न कहत प्रीति अधिकाई ॥
कनक बिंदु दुइ चारिक देखे । राखे सीस सीय सम लेखे ॥

'Beholding a lovely litter of Kus grass he paced round it clockwise and made obeisance. He also placed the dust of Shri Ram's foot-prints on his eyes with an excess of love which could not be described in words. He saw there a few gold spangles which he placed on his head and treated them on par with Sita.'

Again Bharatji began to walk on foot here. When the attendants entreated him to ride on the horse, he started saying—

रामु पयादेहि पायँ सिधाए । हम कहँ रथ गज बाजि बनाए ॥
सिर भर जाउँ उचित अस मोरा । सब तें सेवक धरमु कठोरा ॥

'Shri Ram has gone on foot; while chariots, elephants and horses are intended for me! What behoves me is that I should walk on my head; for the duty of a servant is harder than any other duty.'

झलका झलकत पायन्ह कैसें । पंकज कोस ओस कन जैसें ॥

'The blisters on the soles of his feet shine like the dew-drops on the petals of lotus'—

Then, Maharaj Bharatji reached 'Bhardvaj Ashram.' After formal reception, Bharadvajji as if stinging his heart deeply asked him—

कच्चिन्न तस्यापापस्य पापं कर्तुमिहेच्छसि।
अकण्टकं भोक्तुमना राज्यं तस्यानुजस्य च॥

(Valmiki Ramayan, 2/90/13)

'Isn't so that you are going to the forest with the desire to enjoy the royal enjoyments free from any hurdle, having killed the sinless Shri Ram Chandraji and Lakshman?' These words of Bharadvajji broke the heart of Bharat in to many pieces. He uttered in a faint-hearted voice—

हतोऽस्मि यदि मामेवं भगवानपि मन्यते।

(Valmiki Ramayan, 2/90/15)

'O Lord! I am ruined if Your Holiness too who is omniscient, reckons me as such. I cannot even think of any harm having proceeded from me to Śrī Rāma.'

कैकेय्या यत्कृतं कर्म रामराज्यविधातनम्॥
वनवासादिकं वापि न हि जानामि किञ्चन।
भवत्पादयुगं मेऽद्य प्रमाणं मुनिसत्तम॥
इत्युक्त्वा पादयुगलं मुनेः स्पृष्ट्वार्तमानसः।
ज्ञातुमर्हसि मां देव शुद्धो वाशुद्ध एव वा॥
मम राज्येन किं स्वामिन् रामे तिष्ठति राजनि।
किङ्करोऽहं मुनिश्रेष्ठ रामचन्द्रस्य शाश्वतः॥

(Adhyatma Ramayan, 2/8/46—49)

'O the foremost Muni! I am at all unaware of what Kaikeyi did to create obstacle in the coronation of Shri Ramchandraji or for the banishment of Ram. In this connection your couple feet are the evidence.' Having uttered so holding both the feet of the Muni Bharat began to say, 'O god! Whether I am innocent or guilty, you are able to know it well. O my lord! When Shri Ramchandraji is sovereign, I am simply a servant of

Shri Ramchandraji. How I can have any claim or interest in the rulership?’

Being pleased, Bharadvajji said—‘I knew your all the ins and outs, I did ask you so merely to strengthen your feelings and to enhance your glory and reputation. Really who is another one so fortunate like you whose life, property and vital breath is the lotus feet of Shri Ram—

सो तुम्हार धनु जीवनु प्राणा । भूरिभाग को तुम्हहि समाना ॥
सुनहु भरत रघुबर मन माहीं । पेम पात्रु तुम्ह सम कोउ नाही ॥
लखन राम सीतहि अति प्रीती । निसि सब तुम्हहि सराहत बीती ॥

‘And that is your wealth and life, nay, your vital breath. Who is then, so highly blessed as you? This is however not to be wondered at in your case, who are a son of king Dasharatha and a beloved of brother of Shri Ram. I tell you, Bharata, there is no one held so dear in his heart by the chief of Raghu’s line as you. Lakshmana, Rama and Sita most fondly praised you the whole night.’

I know that you are exceedingly dear to Ram, Lakshman and Sita. When they had stayed here they were praising you highly. You, Bharat, are the verily incarnation of Shri Ram’s love in human form.

तुम्ह तौ भरत मोर मत एहू । धरें देह जनु राम सनेहू ॥

‘As to yourself, Bharat, my option is that you are the very personification of love for Shri Ram.’

Listen O Bharat! I tell you, I am an ascetic indifferent and dwelling in the forest, I don’t tell a lie, in my opinion, I had been blessed with the sight of

Shri Ram, Sita and Lakshman as the fruit of my all spiritual practices and now, as the fruit of Shri Ram's sight I have this auspicious moment of your sight, It is a great blessing to me and to all those living in Prayag—

भरत धन्य तुम्ह जसु जगु जयऊ । कहि अस पेम मगन मुनि भयऊ ॥

'Bharat! You deserve all praise since by your glory, you have conquered the whole world.' As he concluded his speech, the sage was overwhelmed with love.'

Then, Bhardwaji entertained the distinguished guest Bharat with the supernatural powers (Siddhis), all the amenities of comforts were produced. All of them indulged in their tastes according to their will but Bharat is not at all in ease in the separation of Ram, he cannot be swayed by any allurements.

संपत्ति चकई भरतु चक मुनि आयस खेलवार ।

तेहि निसि आश्रम पिंजराँ राखे भा भिनुसार ॥

Affluence, like a female Cakravaka bird and Bharat as her mate, were caged together that night in the the hermitage by the sage's order, which may be compared here with a hunter. And they remained there till it was dawn. The Chakravaka bird—the both male and female cannot meet together in the night. Likewise, all the amenities of enjoyments and Bharat despite (being together in the cage of the hermitage the whole night could not meet each other, what a wonderful example of brother's love full of sacrifice!)

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Maharaj Bharat is proceeding towards Chitrakut making the Nishad king ahead to guide the pathway

as if the love itself in the manifested form is moving. Here, Gosaiji has given a very charming description of this scene. Bharatji has neither shoes in his feet nor umbrella over his head. He is moving ahead on his way with love, self-discipline, austerity and piety. The ocean of love swells up on the way, Bharatji moves on and the atmosphere, there becomes so holy that all the animate and inanimate beings attain the supreme abode by having the sight of Bharat which rids them of the malady of transmigration.

The man who utters the name of Ramji only once, attains salvation and redeems others also, the same Lord Shri Ram, who himself thinks always of Bharat of such Bharat's sight rids people of the bondage of transmigration, it is not a matter of marvel.

The sight of Bharatji is spreading over all around the love of brotherhood, when Maharaj Bharat takes breath pronouncing Shri Ram, the feeling of love swells up all around and even hard-hearted people are melted to hear his loving words then if common men are moved then it is nothing strange.

जबहिं रामु कहि लेहिं उसासा । उमगत पेमु मनहुं चहु पासा ॥
द्रवहिं बचन सुनि कुलिस पषाना । पुरजन पेमु न जाइ बखाना ॥

'Whenever he heaved a long sigh with the word 'Ram', on his lips, it seemed as if love overflowed on all sides. Even adamant and stones melted at his words, the love of citizens was beyond description.'

The men and women who lived by the roadside, make their eyes fruitful to see Bharatji walking on foot and discuss differently with their own views. Praising

Bharat's amiability, affection, and good luck, the women of the forest say—

चलत पयादें खात फल पिता दीन्ह तजि राजु।

जात मनावन रघुबरहि भरत सरिस को आजु॥

भायप भगति भरत आचरनू । कहत सुनत दुख दूषन हरनू॥

'Journeying on foot, living on fruits and relinquishing the sovereignty, bestowed by his father, Bharat is proceeding to persuade Shri Ram to return. Who can equal Bharat today? Bharat's brotherly affection, devotion and conduct dispel the woes and evil of those who talk or hear of them.

The impact of Bharat was but natural. It ought to be so.

Auspicious omens occurred to everyone as well to Bharata. Thus, love upsurged and being overwhelmed with love their legs tottered. At the very moment Ram's friend (Guha) presently pointed to Bharat the crest-jewel of mountains Chitrakut. Oh! On this auspicious mountain my Lord of Raghu's dwells, thinking so Bharatji began to bow and began to applaud in rejoice shouting in the praise of Sita's husband, the chief of Raghus.

भरत पेमु तेहि समय जस तस कहि सकइ न सेषु।

कबिहि अगम जिमि ब्रह्मसुखु अह मम मलिन जनेषु॥

'Bharat's love at that time was more than Shesha (the thousand-headed serpent king) could describe. It is as unapproachable to the poet as the bliss of absorption into Brahma is to those who are tainted by egotism and the sense of mineness.'

Bharatji along with all his host took bath in the Mandakini and leaving all there, he moved ahead only taking Shatrughna and guha with him. Here, Goswamiji has depicted the mental condition of Bharat in an excellent manner—

समुझि मातु करतब सकुचाहीं । करत कुतरक कोटि मन माहीं ॥
रामु लखनु सिय सुनि मम नाऊँ । उठि जनि अनत जाहिं तजि ठाऊँ ॥

मातु मते महँ मानि मोहि जो कछु करहिं सो थोर ।

अघ अवगुन छमि आदरहिं समुझि आपनी ओर ॥

जौं परिहरहिं मलिन मनु जानी । जौं सनमानहिं सेवकु मानी ॥
मोरें सरन रामहि की पनही । राम सुस्वामि दोसु सब जनही ॥

‘As he thought of what his mother had done, he felt diffident and formed ill-conjectives of every kind in his mind. ‘God forbid that Shri Ram, Lakshman and Sita leave this place on hearing my name and shift to some other place!

Taking me to be an accomplice of mother, nothing that he might do would be too much. But looking to his own self, I am sure, he will forgive my faults and will be benevolent to me. Whether He shuns me as one possessing a vile heart or welcome me as his own servant, my only refuge are Shri Ram’s shoes, he is really a noble master while the whole blame lies with his servant (myself)’.

Blessed is Bharat! He knows that he is faultless even then he fears to think when the envoys of Ayodhya, the citizens as a whole, mother Kausalya Nishad and Bharadvajji knowing all the three present, past and future created doubt in their mind first, here

also, what is the surety that Lakshman-Sita would not be suspicious of me or the Lord Ram, Himself, might give up considering me evil minded? Who can believe that my consent was not in consonance of my mother's action? Whatsoever may be, Ram might abandon me, but I will remain only in the refuge of his shoes. On account of my mother really I cannot escape from the blame, but Shri Ram is a noble master, he will certainly be kind to me.

फेरति मनहुँ मातु कृत खोरी । चलत भगति बल धीरज धोरी ॥
जब समुझत रघुनाथ सुभाऊ । तब पथ परत उताइल पाऊ ॥
भरत दसा तेहि अवसर कैसी । जल प्रबाहँ जल अलि गति जैसी ॥
देखि भरत कर सोचु सनेहू । भा निषाद तेहि समयँ बिदेहू ॥

'The sinful act of his mother Kaikeyi dragged him back as it were, while the strength of his devotion pressed him forward, foremost among the resolute as he was. Whenever he thought of Shri Ram's good nature; his feet moved quickly along the way. Bharat's gait at that time resembled the movements of a black bee carried along a stream. Seeing Bharat's anxiety and affection at that moment the Nishad chief forgot all about himself.'

Overwhelmed with love, Bharat and Shatrughna are going on—

स तत्र वज्राङ्कुशवारिजाञ्चितध्वजादिचिह्नानि पदानि सर्वतः ।
ददर्श रामस्य भुवोऽतिमङ्गलान्यचेष्टयत्पादरजःसु सानुजः ॥
अहो सुधन्योऽहममूनि रामपादारविन्दाङ्कितभूतलानि ।
पश्यामि यत्पादरजो विमृग्यं ब्रह्मादिदेवैः श्रुतिभिश्च नित्यम् ॥

(Adhyatma Ramayan, 2/9/2-3)

'Wherever both the brothers (Bharat and Shatrughna) find to see the auspicious foot-prints of Shri Ram marked with the symbol of thunderbolt, goad, flag and lotus, they start rolling their body in the dust of Ram's feet and say that 'O! How blessed we are that we are getting the opportunity to view the ground marked by the foot-prints of Shri Ram. The dust of whose feet searched by even the Lord Brahma and other gods and the Vedas always.'

Perceiving Bharat's condition; beasts and birds and even inanimate creatures (such as trees) were overwhelmed with emotion. Overpowered by love the beasts and birds like the fixed stony rocks began to look towards Bharat without a wink and the trees began to shake being melted emotionally—

होत न भूतल भाउ भरतको । अचर सचर चर अचर करत को ॥

'If Bharat had not been born on this globe (or if the earth had not witnessed his love) it would not have been possible to turn inanimate into animate and animate into inanimate beings.'

Seeing this condition of Bharat and Shatrughna overpowered by love, Bharat's friend (Guha) lost his way. Along with the two lunatics how was it possible for the third one to remain untouched and escape? All the three got intoxicated in the wine of love, but the Gods raining flowers making Guha alert showed him the pathway. Praise to this love!

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On the otherside Lakshmanji got suspicious. He thought Bharat's arrival with malevolence, so

forgetting the morality and ethics he began to say—
 'Today I will teach him a good lesson in the encounter—
 राम निरादर कर फलु पाई। सोवहुँ समर सेज दोउ भाई॥

'Reaping the fruit of their contempt for Shri Ram let the two brothers sleep on the couch of the battlefield.'

Praising Lakshman for his good motive Shri Ram, told him, about the virtues of Bharat and his greatness; Lakshman's furry cooled.

Bharat's life is heart-touching. Despite being heart-touching, holy, saintly and faultless, he has to become the victim of suspicion of all. There is no such example in the history of the world that a man free of craving for kingdom, righteous, renunciant and a great soul like Bharat had to become a victim of such ill-suspicion. Even then, Bharat is tolerant and being frustrated, does not commit suicide and by proclaiming his innocence with peace, love and patience, he becomes adorable of the world.

After a while, Bharat reached there. Seeing from afar Shri Ram sitting on the grass mat, emaciated due to vows and fast, Bharat burst into tears and he began to say wailing bitterly he began to say—

यः संसदि प्रकृतिभिर्भवेद्युक्त उपासितुम्।
 वन्यैर्मृगैरुपासीनः सोऽयमास्ते ममाग्रजः॥
 वासोभिर्बहुसाहस्रैर्यो महात्मा पुरोचितः।
 मृगाजिने सोऽयमिह प्रवस्ते धर्ममाचरन्॥
 अधारयद्यो विविधाश्चित्राः सुमनसः सदा।
 सोऽयं जटाभारमिमं सहते राघवः कथम्॥

यस्य यज्ञैर्यथादिष्टैर्युक्तो धर्मस्य सञ्चयः ।
 शरीरक्लेशसम्भूतं स धर्मं परिमार्गते ॥
 चन्दनेन महार्हेण यस्याङ्गमुपसेवितम् ।
 मलेन तस्याङ्गमिदं कथमार्यस्य सेव्यते ॥
 मन्निमित्तमिदं दुःखं प्राप्तो रामः सुखोचितः ।
 धिग्जीवितं नृशंसस्य मम लोकविगर्हितम् ॥

(Valmiki Ramayan, 2/99/31—36)

'Here is that very elder brother of mine sitting in the company of wild deer, who deserves to be attended upon by ministers in a royal assembly. The same exalted soul who was used to wearing clothes worth many thousands in the city of Ayodhyā, puts on in this forest today pieces of deerskin, one about his loins and the other as an upper garment, discharging his sacred obligation towards his father. How does the selfsame Śrī Rāma, a scion of Raghu, whoever adorned his head with beautiful flowers of every description, endure now this burden of matted locks on his head? He who deserved to acquire merit through sacrificial performances undertaken as enjoined by the scriptures, is striving after merit earned through mortification of the flesh ! How is this person of my celebrated elder brother, which used to be adorned with sandal-paste of great value is now covered with dirt? Śrī Rāma, who deserves all kinds of comforts, has met with this misfortune on my account. Woe to my life, condemned by the world, cruel as I am. Lamenting so, and flowing the constant flow of tears,

Bharatji reached near Shri Ram, but due to extreme distress he could not approach his feet even. Just near by he fell down on the ground flat calling 'Oh Arya' like a helpless orphan. His throat choked in agony. He could express nothing.

Shri Ram could hardly recognise the lean and thin and faded Bharat and with great love and honour he lifted him up smelt his head having seated him in his lap, he said—'Brother! Why is your appearance so? Forsaking the sovereignty how did you come to this forest?' Then, Bharatji conveyed the news of his father's death and said—'My mother Kaikeyi, having been widow is lying in the dark hell of reproach.'

Just hearing about his father's death, Shri Ram's eyes were filled with tears. Having saluted the mothers and the Guru Vasishtha and other Brahmans and after meeting all, Shri Ram took bath in the Mandakini, offered libation of water and performed the offering of ball of flour for his dead father. That day, everyone kept fast. The next day, all assembled and then, Bharatji prayed to Shri Ramji for his coronation and said—

एभिश्च सचिवैः सार्धं शिरसा याचितो मया।

भ्रातुः शिष्यस्य दासस्य प्रसादं कर्तुमर्हसि॥

(Valmiki Ramayan, 2/101/12)

'Solicited by me with bent head in conjunction with these ministers, be pleased to show grace to this servant, who is at the same time your younger brother and pupil.'

राज्यं पालय पित्र्यं ते ज्येष्ठस्त्वं मे पिता तथा ।
 क्षत्रियाणामयं धर्मो यत्प्रजापरिपालनम् ॥
 इष्ट्वा यज्ञैर्बहुविधैः पुत्रानुत्पाद्य तन्तवे ।
 राज्ये पुत्रं समारोप्य गमिष्यसि ततो वनम् ॥
 इदानीं वनवासस्य कालो नैव प्रसीद मे ।
 मातुर्मे दुष्कृतं किञ्चित् स्मर्तुं नार्हसि पाहि नः ॥

(Adhyatma Ramayan, 2/9/23—25)

‘Because, you are the eldest, hold the position of my father, so sustain the subject by doing the royal duty. To sustain the subjects is the moral duty of the Kshatriyas. After performing the Yagya of different kinds and begetting the son for continuing the line of family and after coronating the son on the throne, you may depart for the forest. It is not proper time for living in the forest. Be graceful to me. Protect me by forgetting the evil done by my mother.’

Saying so Bharatji lay prostrate at the feet of Shri Ram. Affectionately, Shri Ram lifting him seated him in his lap and filling his eyes with tears said mildly—‘Brother! Our father has granted you that sovereignty and banishment to me—

अतः पितुर्वचः कार्यमावाभ्यामतियत्नतः ।
 पितुर्वचनमुल्लङ्घ्य स्वतन्त्रो यस्तु वर्तते ॥
 स जीवन्नेव मृतको देहान्ते निरयं व्रजेत् ।

(Adhyatma Ramayan, 2/9/31-32)

‘So, both of us should follow the words of our father scrupulously. Those who disobey their father’s words and act arbitrarily, are lifeless despite living and after death they go to hell.’ So, reign Ayodhya. Bharat

said—'Father was under the sway of woman, being overpowered by lust, his mind was not stable, he was as if intoxicated in passion, the words of father of intoxicated mind should not be taken as truth.' Then, the chief of Raghu's Shri Ram said—'Dear brother! You should not talk to me so, the father was neither under the influence of woman nor passionate and nor foolish. He was a great man of truth and he did so to prove his past promised words true. How can we, the Raghus declare his words as false?' Bharatji said—'If it is so, I, myself, too, like Lakshman, will serve you accompanying you here in the forest. If you don't accept my prayer, going on fast, I will give up my life.' Shri Ram persuaded him by rebuking him, but when Bharat was not convinced by any means, Shri Ram pointed towards Vasishtha.

एकान्ते भरतं प्राह वसिष्ठो ज्ञानिनां वरः ।
 वत्स गुह्यं शृणुष्वेदं मम वाक्यात्सुनिश्चितम् ॥
 रामो नारायणः साक्षाद्ब्रह्मणा याचितः पुरा ।
 रावणस्य वधार्थाय जातो दशरथात्मजः ॥
 योगमायापि सीतेति जाता जनकनन्दिनी ।
 शेषोऽपि लक्ष्मणो जातो राममन्वेति सर्वदा ॥
 रावणं हन्तुकामास्ते गमिष्यन्ति न संशयः ।
 कैकेय्या वरदानादि यद्यनिष्ठुरभाषणम् ॥
 सर्वं देवकृतं नोचेदेवं सा भाषयेत्कथम् ।
 तस्मात्त्यजाग्रहं तात रामस्य विनिवर्तने ॥

(Adhyatma Ramayan, 2/9/42—46)

'Vasishtha the foremost among the wise, took

Bharata in a secluded corner and said—"Listen my child, my secret and decided words. Rāma is Narayana himself. He was requested by Brahmā in some previous Kalpas. To fulfil that he has appeared as the son of Dasharath for killing Ravan. His Yogamaya became Sītā, the daughter of Janak. Shesha also incarnated as Lakshman who always follows him. With the intention of killing Ravan they will go, there is no doubt. The boons of Kaikeyi and whatever harsh words she spoke, was all designed by the gods. Otherwise how could she have uttered such things? Therefore my dear Bharat, give up insisting for Ram's return."

Keeping in mind Shri Ram's outstanding affection for himself, One's own moral of service, and the secret meaningful words of the Guru, Bharatji agreed to return Ayodhya and saluting the wooden sandals of Shri Ram's feet he said—

चतुर्दश हि वर्षाणि जटाचीरधरो ह्यहम्॥
 फलमूलाशनो वीर भवेयं रघुनन्दन।
 तवागमनमाकाङ्क्षन्वसन्वै नगराद्वहिः॥
 तव पादुकयोर्न्यस्य राज्यतन्त्रं परंतप।
 चतुर्दशे हि सम्पूर्णे वर्षेऽहनि रघूत्तम॥
 न द्रक्ष्यामि यदि त्वां तु प्रवेक्ष्यामि हुताशनम्।
 तथेति च प्रतिज्ञाय तं परिष्वज्य सादरम्॥

(Valmiki Ramayan, 2/112/23—26)

'Reverentially bowing down to the wooden sandals, he spoke as follows to Śrī Rāma : "Indeed, having relegated the burden of rulership to the wooden

sandals, O gallant brother, I should like to live on fruits and roots alone for fourteen years, O delight of the Raghus, wearing matted locks on my head and the bark of trees on my person and actually dwelling outside the city, longing for your return to the capital, O scorcher of enemies ! If, however, when the fourteenth year of your exile has fully ended, O jewel among the Raghus, I do not see you returned to Ayodhyā, the following day, I for my part shall enter the fire once for all.'

Hearing this firm vow of Bharat, with extreme affection Shri Ram clasped Bharat to His bosom and gave word to return to Ayodhya at the exact time after the banishment period is over. The conversant in righteousness, Bharatji having taken the round and having saluted Shri Ramji, first put His wooden sandals inlaid with jewels and gold on his head and then, he got it placed on the elephant. Returning from the forest to Ayodhya and reaching Nandigram out of the city, he said—

एतद्राज्यं मम भ्रात्रा दत्तं संन्यासमुत्तमम् ।
 योगक्षेमवहे चेमे पादुके हेमभूषिते ॥
 छत्रं धारयत क्षिप्रमार्यपादाविमौ मतौ ।
 आभ्यां राज्ये स्थितो धर्मः पादुकाभ्यां गुरोर्मम ॥
 भ्रात्रा तु मयि संन्यासो निक्षिप्तः सौहृदादयम् ।
 तमिमं पालयिष्यामि राघवागमनं प्रति ॥
 क्षिप्रं संयोजयित्वा तु राघवस्य पुनः स्वयम् ।
 चरणौ तौ तु रामस्य द्रक्ष्यामि सहपादुकौ ॥

ततो निक्षिप्तभारोऽहं राघवेण समागतः ।
 निवेद्य गुरवे राज्यं भजिष्ये गुरुवर्तिताम् ॥
 राघवाय च संन्यासं दत्त्वेमे वरपादुके ।
 राज्यं चेदमयोध्यां च धूतपापो भवाम्यहम् ॥

(Valmiki Ramayan, 2/115/14, 16—20)

‘This kingdom has been given to me by my elder brother, Śrī Rāma, as a foremost sacred trust, as well as these wooden sandals decked with gold, which will supply all our needs and bring security to us. Hold the royal umbrella over these sandals; they are considered by me to be as good as the feet of my elder brother. By these wooden sandals of my elder brother will righteousness be established in the kingdom. From affection alone has this sacred trust been committed to my charge by my elder brother. I shall keep this aforesaid trust till the return of Śrī Rāma, a scion of Raghu. Having undoubtedly restored these wooden sandals to Śrī Rāma’s feet immediately on his return to the capital myself, I for my part shall behold those feet placed on the wooden sandals. Having restored the kingdom to my elder brother, when reunited with Śrī Rāma, a scion of Raghu, and thereby laid down the burden of responsibility, I shall then assume the role of a servant of my elder brother. Nay, having given back to Śrī Rāma, a scion of Raghu, this kingdom, held as a trust till then, as well as the city of Ayodhyā and the pair of excellent wooden sandals, I shall have shaken of the stigma of having been instrumental in bringing about the exile of my elder brother.’

Then, the wooden sandals were consecrated. Bharatji, himself held the royal umbrella-whisk. Bharatji used to do all the royal affairs after seeking the permission from the wooden sandals. Whatever the work was done or any present received, first of all he offered it to the sandals and then it was managed accordingly and that was stated before the sandals. Thus, being subordinate to the sandals, Bharatji began to live at Nandigram practising the observances and austerities. In connection with his living way and his activities Shri Gosaiji writes—

जटाजूट सिर मुनिपट धारी । महि खनि कुस साँथरी सँवारी ॥
 असन बसन बासन ब्रत नेमा । करत कठिन रिषि धरम सप्रेमा ॥
 भूषन बसन भोग सुख भूरी । मन तन बचन तजे तिन तूरी ॥
 अवध राजु सुर राजु सिहाई । दसरथ धनु सुनि धनदु लजाई ॥
 तेहिं पुर बसत भरत बिनु रागा । चंचरीक जिमि चंपक बागा ॥
 रमा बिलासु राम अनुरागी । तजत बमन जिमि जन बड़भागी ॥

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देह दिनहुँ दिन दूबरि होई । घटइ तेजु बलु मुख छबि सोई ॥
 नित नव राम प्रेम पनु पीना । बढ़त धरम दलु मनु न मलीना ॥
 जिमि जलु निघटत सरद प्रकासे । बिलसत बेतस बनज बिकासे ॥
 सम दम संजम नियम उपासा । नखत भरत हिय बिमल अकासा ॥
 ध्रुव बिस्वासु अवधि राका सी । स्वामि सुरति सुरबीथि बिकासी ॥
 राम पेम बिधु अचल अदोषा । सहित समाज सोह नित चोखा ॥
 भरत रहनि समुझनि करतूती । भगति बिरति गुन बिमल बिभूती ॥
 बरनत सकल सुकबि सकुचाहीं । सेस गनेस गिरा गमु नाहीं ॥

नित पूजत प्रभु पाँवरी प्रीति न हृदयँ समाति ।

मागि मागि आयसु करत राज काज बहु भाँति ॥

पुलक गात हियँ सिय रघुबीरू । जीह नामु जप लोचन नीरू ॥
लखन राम सिय कानन बसहीं । भरतु भवन बसि तप तनु कसहीं ॥

'Wearing a tuft of a matted locks on his head and clad in hermit's robes, he dug the earth low and spread there on a litter of kus grass. In food, dress, utensils sacred observances and austerities he devoutly practised the rigid vow of hermits. He professedly discarded, in thought, word and deed all adornments of body, wearing apparel and the many pleasures of the senses. The sovereignty of Ayodhya was the envy even of Indra (the lord of Celestials), While the very report of the riches; possessed by Dasarath put to shame even kuber (the god of riches) was put to shame; Yet in that city Bharat dwelt as indifferent as a bee in a garden of champak flowers. The blessed souls who are devoted to Shri Ram renounce like vomit the splendour of Lakshmi (the wealth and enjoyments of the world). His body grew emaciated day by day. His fat was reduced; yet his strength of body and charm of the face remained the same. His vow of devotion to Shri Ram was ever afresh and strong. His adherence to virtue steadily grew stronger and his mind was not at all sad, even as with the advent of autumn, the water (of lakes and rivers etc.) decreases but the ratan plants thrive and the lotus blossom. Control of the mind and senses, self-restraint, religious observances and fasting shone like so many stars in the cloudless sky of Bharat's heart. His faith stood as the pole-star, the

prospect of Shri Ram's return on the expiry of His term of exile represented the full moon night, while the thought of his lord glistened like the milky way. And his affection for Shri Ram was like a fixed and spotless moon that ever shone clear amidst a galaxy of stars. All great poets hesitate to portray the mode of living, the gresp, the doings, the devotion, the dispassion, the stainless virtues and the glory of Bharata; they baffle the wits of even Shesha (the thousand-headed lord of serpents) Ganesha (the god of wisdom) and Saraswati (the goddess of speech).

He daily worshipped the Lord's sandals with the heart overflowing with love and affection and constantly sought guidance from them in the disposal of the many affairs of the state.

His body thrilling all over (with emotion) and heart full of Sita and Shri Ram, his tongue repeated Shri Ram's name and tears flowed from his eyes. Lakshman, Shri Ram and Sita dwelt in the forest; while Bharat mortified his flesh through austere penance even though living at home.

Be fulfilled by following the activities of Bharata and meditating on Bharatji lovely embodiment of dispassion and sacrifice.

This episode teaches us how a younger brother should behave with his elder brother setting the example of modesty and sacrifice.

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After killing Ravana, Shri Ram, Sita, Lakshman

along with kins, friends and attendants are journeying back Ayodhya by the Puspak Viman. On the other side Bharatji is counting the days in the term of Shri Ram's exile. It is going to expire a day hence, Bharatji's anxiety is going beyond limit, he thinks—

कारन कवन नाथ नहिं आयउ । जानिकुटिल किधौं मोहि बिसरायउ ॥
 अहह धन्य लछिमन बड़भागी । राम पदारबिंदु अनुरागी ॥
 कपटी कुटिल मोहि प्रभु चीन्हा । ताते नाथ संग नहिं लीन्हा ॥
 जौं करनी समुझै प्रभु मोरी । नहिं निस्तार कलप सत कोरी ॥
 जन अवगुन प्रभु मान न काऊ । दीन बंधु अति मृदुल सुभाऊ ॥
 मोरे जियँ भरोस दृढ़ सोई । मिलिहहिं राम सगुन सुभ होई ॥
 बीतें अवधि रहहिं जौं प्राणा । अधम कवन जग मोहि समाना ॥

‘How is it that the Lord did not turn up? Has He cast me out of His mind, knowing me to be crooked? Ah! How blessed and fortunate is Lakshman, who is truly devoted to Shri Ram's lotus-feet. The Lord knew me to be deceitful and perverse, that is why He refused to take me along with Him. (Really it is proper for Kaikeyi's son) If the Lord were to consider my doings, there would be no redemption for me even after countless cycles. But the Lord never takes into account the faults of His devotees, being a friend of the humble and most tender-hearted. I have a firm conviction in my heart that Shri Ram will surely meet me: for the omens are so propitious. But, if I outlive the expiry of the time limit, no one would be so despicable in this world as I’

Realising such distressed condition of Bharat on the otherside—‘ये यथा मां प्रपद्यन्ते तांस्तथैव भजाम्यहम्’ (Gita 4/11)

Lord Shri Ram also recollecting His promise, became restless and sent Hanuman to convey the message. Bharat's mind is sinking in the great ocean of Shri Ram's separation. In the meanwhile in the form of a Brahman, Hanumanji came there as a ship of emancipation. Hanumanji dedicated to the Lord Ram, was charmed to see the condition of Bharat, devoted to Ram, he was thrilled, tears flowed from his eyes. What was the condition of Bharat?

बैठे देखि कुसासन जटा मुकुट कृस गात ।

राम राम रघुपति जपत स्रवत नयन जल जात ॥

'He found Bharat seated on a mat of Kusha grass emaciated in body, with a coil of matted hair for a crown and the, 'Ram, Ram, Raghupati' on his lips, his lotus eyes streaming with tears.'

At this sight of Bharat Hanuman was overjoyed; to see this persona steeped in meditation repeating the name of Shri Ram; He addressed Bharat in words that were as nectar to his ears—

जासु बिरहँ सोचहु दिनु राती । रटहु निरंतर गुन गन पाँती ॥

रघुकुल तिलक सुजन सुखदाता । आयउ कुसल देव मुनि त्राता ॥

रिपु रन जीति सुजस सुर गावत । सीता सहित अनुज प्रभु आवत ॥

'He, in whose absence you pine day and night, whose innumerable virtues you are incessantly recounting the glory of Raghu's line, the delight of the virtuous and the deliverer of gods and sages, has safely arrived. Having conquered his foe in battle with the gods to hymn His praises, the Lord is now on His way with Sita and Lakshman.'

The moment Bharat heard these words he forgot all his woes, like a thirsty man who has secured nectar. The lifeless got the life. Being overpowered with joy Bharatji asked—

को तुम्ह तात कहाँ ते आए । मोहि परम प्रिय बचन सुनाए ॥

‘Who are you my beloved friend and whence have you come? You have told me a most pleasing news.’ Hanumanji said—

मारुत सुत मैं कपि हनुमाना । नामु मोर सुनु कृपानिधाना ॥
दीनबंधु रघुपति कर किंकर । x x x ॥

‘Listen, O fountain of mercy! I am the son of the wind-god, a monkey; Hanuman is my name. I am a humble servant of Shri Ram (the Lord of the Raghus) the befriender of the meek.’

Hearing this, Bharat rose and reverently embraced him.

सुनत भरत भेंटैउ उठि सादर ॥

‘The affection with which he embraced him was too great for his heart to contain; his eyes streamed with tears and every hair on his body stood erect. Bharatji says—

कपि तव दरस सकल दुख बीते । मिले आजु मोहि राम पिरीते ॥
बार बार बूझी कुसलाता । तो कहूँ देउँ काह सुनु भ्राता ॥
एहि संदेस सरिस जग माहीं । करि बिचार देखेउँ कछु नाहीं ॥
नाहिन तात उरिन मैं तोही । अब प्रभु चरित सुनावहु मोही ॥

‘At your very sight, O Hanuman, all my woes have disappeared. In you, I have embraced today my beloved Ram Himself.’ Again and again he enquired after Shri Ram’s welfare and said, “Listen, brother’

what shall I give you (in return for this happy news)? I have pondered and found that there is nothing in this world to match the news you have brought to me. I am thus unable to repay my debt to you. Now, pray, recount to me the doings of my Lord.'

Then Hanumanji bowed his head at Bharat's feet and narrated all the meritorious deeds of Shri Ram (the Lord of the Raghus) in short. Then, Bharat again asked—

कहु कपि कबहुँ कृपाल गोसाईं । सुमिरहिं मोहि दास की नाई ॥

निज दास ज्यों रघुवंसभूषन कबहुँ मम सुमिरन कर्यो ।

सुनि भरत बचन बिनीत अति कपि पुलकि तन चरनन्हि पर्यो ॥

रघुबीर निज मुख जासु गुन गन कहत अग जग नाथ जो ।

काहे न होइ बिनीत परम पुनीत सदगुन सिंधु सो ॥

'Tell me, Hanuman, does my benevolent Lord ever remember me as one of His servants? 'Did the Jewel of Raghu's line ever remember me as His servant?' Hanuman was thrilled with joy to hear this over modest query of Bharat and fell at the latter's feet, saying to himself, 'How can he be otherwise than humble, the holiest of the holy and an ocean of noble virtues whose praises Shri Ram (The hero of Raghu's line), the lord of the animals and inanimate creation, recites with His own lips?'

Being choked in voice Hanumanji said—

राम प्रान प्रिय नाथ तुम्ह सत्य बचन मम तात ।

पुनि पुनि मिलत भरत सुनि हरष न हृदयँ समात ॥

'To Shri Ram you are dear as life, my lord; take my words to be true, dear brother.' Hearing this, Bharat

embraced Hanuman again and again with a joy which could not be contained in his heart.'

Bharat and Hanuman embrace each other again and again. The joy is beyond limit. Hanumanji forthwith returned to Shri Ram. The news was conveyed in the whole palace and in the whole city. There was the extreme joy all around. The entire city was decorated.

The aeroplane of the Lord reached Ayodhya. Along with Bharat and Shatrughna came all the other people and ministers to receive. The aircraft landed, going into the plane Bharat lay down flat at the feet of Shri Ram and began to wash his feet with his joyous tears. The Lord of Raghus lifted him up and clasped him to His bosom. Then Bharat met brother Lakshman and bowed down to the Mother Sita. Having seated Bharat in His lap, Shri Ram ordered the aircraft to go towards Bharat's hermitage. Then coming to the city He met everyone. Shri Ram disentangled Bharat's matted hair with His own hands. Then, He bathed all the three brothers and He, Himself disentangled His matted hair and bathed.

Then, the Lord occupied the royal throne. All the three brothers were in the Lord's service. From time to time by asking many different types of question Bharat began to receive many teachings lastly, along with Shri Ram he attained the Supreme abode.

Bharat's character is matchless and a great ideal. His love for the Lord Ram is unparalleled, that is why it has been said that—

भरत सरिस को राम सनेही । जगु जप राम रामु जप जेही ॥

'Has anyone loved Shri Rama, even as Bharata, whose name is ever on the lips of Rama, while Shri Rama's name is repeated by the whole world.'

It is the brotherly love of Bharatji only in the history of the whole universe that stands alone. His sacrifice of sovereignty, self-restrain, vow, morality, discipline etc., all are praiseworthy and imitable. A great lesson should be taken from his character the moral of self-sacrifice, humility, compassion gravity, simplicity, forgiveness, dispassion and mainly brotherly love.



Shri Lakshman's Brotherhood-Love

अहह धन्य लछ्मिन बड़भागी । राम पदारबिंदु अनुरागी ॥

'Ah! How blessed and fortunate is Lakshman who is truly devoted to Shri Ram's lotus feet.'

The glory of Lakshmanji who is like Chatak for Ram-cloud, is beyond limit. Lakshmanji had incarnated merely to serve Shri Ram, dwelling at His feet. That is why today with the dark idol of Shri Ram, Lakshman's fair idol is also installed and Lakshman's name is recalled with Shri Ram's name. Nobody says 'Ram-Bharat' or Ram Shatrughna but everyone recalls 'Ram-Lakshman'. Shri Lakshmanji was firm, vigorous, radiant, pledged to celibacy, self-restraint, restraint of sense organs, stout, simple and handsome endowed with detachment, fearless, soft-hearted, recluse, intelligent, wise, powerful, self-exerting, moral and having the knowledge of ethics, truthful and devoted to Ram. His sole moral was to follow Shri Ram blindly as an obedient servant adoring His feet. He became oblivious of himself in Shri Ram's service. As is Bharat's humility and whole-heartedly sweet outstanding love, so is the valorous service-dedicated supreme ideal love of Shri Lakshmanji.

Shri Lakshmanji goes away with his elder brother Shri Ramji to guard the 'Yagyas' of Shri Vishwamitra merely at the age of fifteen after passing his days of

eating and sporting in his childhood along with Rama. There he remains always alert in his brother's service in all respects. The sight of his service at Janakpur is worth seeing when in the night Shri Ram-Lakshman with Vishwamitraji are staying as the guest of Maharaja Janakji at their halting place. Goswamiji describes his behaviour thus—

सभय सप्रेम बिनीत अति सकुच सहित दोउ भाइ ।

गुर पद पंकज नाइ सिर बैठे आयसु पाइ ॥

निसि प्रबेस मुनि आयसु दीन्हा । सबहीं संध्याबंदनु कीन्हा ॥
कहत कथा इतिहास पुरानी । रुचिर रजनि जुग जाम सिरानी ॥
मुनिबर सयन कीन्हि तब जाई । लगे चरन चापन दोउ भाई ॥
जिन्ह के चरन सरोरुह लागी । करत बिबिध जप जोग बिरागी ॥
तेइ दोउ बंधु प्रेम जनु जीते । गुर पद कमल पलोटत प्रीते ॥
बार बार मुनि अग्या दीन्ही । रघुबर जाइ सयन तब कीन्ही ॥
चापत चरन लखनु उर लाएँ । सभय सप्रेम परम सचु पाएँ ॥
पुनि पुनि प्रभु कह सोवहु ताता । पौढ़े धरि उर पद जलजाता ॥

उठे लखनु निसि बिगत सुनि अरुनसिखा धुनि कान ।

गुर तें पहिलेहिं जगतपति जागे रामु सुजान ॥

'Meekly and most submissively, with a mingled feeling of awe and love, the two brothers bowed their head at the lotus feet of the preceptor (Vishwamitra) and sat down with permission.

At the approach of night the sage (Vishwamitra) gave the word and all performed their evening devotions; and while the sage recited old legends and narratives, two watches of the beautiful night passed. The chief of the sages, Vishwamitra, then retired to his bed; and

the two brothers began to massage his feet. The couple whose lotus feet are sought by men of dispassion muttering various sacred formulae and practising different kinds of yoga (means of union with God) lovingly massaged the lotus like feet of their Guru, conquered as it were by his love. When the sage asked Him again and again, the chief of Raghus race went to bed only then. Lakshman pressed the Lord's feet to his bosom and caressed them with reverence and love deriving supreme joy from this service. It was only when the Lord repeatedly said—'Return now, my brother; that he laid himself down cherishing his brother's lotus feet in his heart.

Towards the close of night, at the sound of cock-crow, got up Lakshman. The Lord of the universe, the all wise Shri Ram, also woke before His preceptor.'

Ah! What an excellent ideal sight! Shri Ram-Lakshman had gone out to visit the city; there they got absorbed in the love of all the citizens—men and women, children and adults but realising getting late they were afraid of the Guru Vishwamitraji. So, by coaxing the children, the Mithila-charming couple returned their halting place. Having saluted the feet of the guru, with fear, love, humility and hesitation, both the brothers remained stood. When Guruji asked them to be seated then they sat down. By the permission of the Guru they performed evening devotion timely. Two watches of the night, then, passed in the narratives and discourses of the Puranas. Then, the sage Vishwamitra retired to bed. Now, both the brothers

began to caress his feet. The sage asked again and again to retire but they did not want to be deprived of the merit of massaging the feet. On his insistence Shri Ram also retired on bed. Now, Lakshman began to caress his legs silently with mixed feeling of love and awe placing them on his bosom so that Ram might fall asleep. Shri Ram said again and again and then Lakshmanji, enshrining the lotus feet of Rama in his heart, went to sleep. Next day, in the morning, just hearing the crowing of the cock, first of all Lakshmanji got up and then Shri Ramji and last of all Guru Vishwamitraji. Then ideal routine of the night would reflect the picture of the day routine. In the modern days, such a sight is but a dream. It makes us to assume how Lakshmanji would have been serving Shri Ram.

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Shri Lakshman's devotion to his brother is unparalleled. He could tolerate everything but Shri Ram's disgrace, insult and sorrow was unbearable to him. He never infuriated with anyone for himself and for his own comforts. His own life was all sacrifice for Rama and he kept engaged himself in hard services of Rama, but the least disrespect of Rama got him agitated and he hissed like a death-like poisonous cobra. Then, he cared for none whosoever might be before him.

At Janakpur, when in the Swayambar (the assembly of suitors) of Sita, none was able to break the bow of Lord Shiva, Janakji was greatly shocked, he said in the pitiful words—

अब जनि कोउ माखै भट मानी । बीर बिहीन मही मैं जानी ॥
तजहु आस निज निज गृह जाहू । लिखा न बिधि बैदेहि बिबाहू ॥
जौं जनतेउँ बिनु भट भुबि भाई । तौ पनु करि होतेउँ न हँसाई ॥

‘Now no one who prides on his valour should feel offended, if I assert that there is no hero left on earth to my mind. Give up all hope and turn your faces homewards. It is not the will of providence that Sita should be married. All my religious merit shall be gone if I abandon my vow; the princess must remain a maiden; what can I do? Had I known, brothers, that there are no more heroes in the world, I would not have made myself a laughing stock by undertaking such a vow.’

All who heard Janak's words, men and women alike, felt distressed at the sight of Janaki. But Lakshman's mental condition is, however something otherwise. The moment he heard the words ‘no one should feel proud of his valour from Janak's mouth, he got incensed. He thought to himself—‘What is this Janak saying in the presence of Shri Ram?’ but he kept quiet because there was no permission of Shri Ram. But when Janakji said that ‘there is no hero left on the earth again and again, Lakshman's eyebrows were knit, his eyes shot fire and his lips quivered. He could not restrain himself, bowing his head of the feet of Shri Ram he said—

रघुबंसिन्ह महुँ जहँ कोउ होई । तेहिं समाज अस कहइ न कोई ॥
कही जनक जसि अनुचित बानी । बिद्यमान रघुकुल मनि जानी ॥

‘In an assembly where anyone of Raghu's race is

present no one would dare speak such uncalled for words as Janak has done, even though conscious of the presence of Shri Ram, the jewel of Raghu's race.

'Listen, where the jewel of Raghu's race is present, who can speak such unbecoming words? Turning towards his brother Lakshman adds—'Listen, O Delighter of solar race! If I but have your permission, I will lift the globe like a ball—

काचे घट जिमि डारौं फोरी । सकउँ मेरु मूलक जिमि तोरी ॥

'I will lift it and smash it like an ill baked earthen jar; and by the glory of your majesty. O blessed Lord, I can break Mount Meru like a radish.

What, then, is this wretched old bow? Realizing this, my Lord, let me have your command and see what wonders I work—

कमल नाल जिमि चाप चढ़ावौं । जोजन सत प्रमान लै धावौं ॥

तोरौं छत्रक दंड जिमि तव प्रताप बल नाथ ।

जौं न करौं प्रभु पद सपथ कर न धरौं धनु भाथ ॥

'I will string the bow as though it were a lotus stalk and run with it not less than about eight hundred miles. By the might of your glory, O Lord! I will snap it like the stalk of a mushroom. Or if I fail, I swear by your feet never to handle a bow or quiver again.'

As Lakshman spoke these angry words, the earth shook, the whole assembly was struck with terror; blushed lotus heart of Sitaji bloomed, preceptor (Vishwamitra) the Lord of Raghus and all the hermits were glad at heart and thrilled all over again and again. Lakshman fulfilled his duty, Shri Ram's glory was

revealed to all. Seeing the living image of heroism, all were charmed; But Shri Ram with a single sign, turned this screen of heroism—

सयनहिं रघुपति लखनु नेवारे । प्रेम समेत निकट बैठारे ॥

‘With a sign Shri Ram checked Lakshman and made him sit beside him.’

Then, Shri Ram broke the Shiva’s bow with the permission of the Guru. Parashuramji appeared and being furious, he began to ask the name and address of that who broke the bow. In another way, Shri Ram accepted the act of breaking the bow—

नाथ संभु धनु भंजनिहारा । होइहि केउ एक दास तुम्हारा ॥

‘My Lord! it must be someone of your servants who has broken the bow of Shiva.’

Here, the dialogue between Parashuram and Lakshman is very interesting. Lakshman has related Shri Ram’s Majesty satirically and Shri Ram in different ways supported Lakshman’s versions. It seems as if both the brothers joining each other inwardly and behaving differently outwardly, are supporting each other. Ultimately, hearing soft profound words of Shri Ram, Parashuramji got enlightened. Then, he said—

राम रमापति कर धनु लेहू । खैंचहु मिटै मोर संदेहू ॥

‘O Ram take this bow of Rama’s Lord and draw it, so that my doubts may be cleared.’

देत चापु आपुहिं चलि गयऊ । परसुराम मन बिसमय भयऊ ॥

‘As Parashuram offered his bow it passed into Ram’s hands of its own accord and Parashuram felt amazed at this.’

Parashuram's joy had no bounds to realise the Lord's glory and having saluted Shri Ram and Lakshman, he made his way.

All the four brothers were married. All of them came back to Ayodhya. The whole royal family rejoiced greatly. The mothers were filled with delight.

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Then, Shri Bharat, Shatrughna departed for their maternal home but Lakshman did not go. He does not mind city or forest maternal home or father-in-law's home, he must have Ramji with him, he can not live anywhere without Rama. If the shadow separates from the body then Lakshman might be separated from Shri Ram. 'The attraction of Lakshman's love is so acute that Shri Ram can neither sleep, bathe and nor eat delicious food without him alone'—

न च तेन विना निद्रां लभते पुरुषोत्तमः ॥

मृष्टमन्नमुपानीतमश्नाति न हि तं विना ।

(Valmiki Ramayan, 1/18/30-31)

Without him 'Shri Ram, foremost of men did not have even a wink of sleep nor did he partake of a daintly dish brought for him without Lakshman.'

The preparation of Ram's coronation was made Lakshman's joys had no bound. The intensity of Lakshman's eagerness to see Shri Ram on the royal throne can be imagined by the Lakshman's fiery reaction on the command of banishment for Ram in place of the throne. The intensity of anger depends on how much the occurrence is against one's will.

Accepting the command of exile, having made the

obeisance and circumambulation to Kaikeyi and Dasharath when Shri Ram came out of the palace to seek permission from mother Kausalya, Lakshman also followed Him with tears in his eyes in an angry mood. He is the shadow of Shri Ram in every case.

Both the brothers reached mother Kausalya. Shri Rama told the whole affair. The mother's lamentation was beyond limit; the mother tried to check Ram, but Shri Ram didn't agree. This action of Shri Ram didn't appeal to Lakshman, he was whole-heartedly the follower of Shri Ram, but he could not restrain himself to see Shri Ram being deprived of his right. This is the distinctive characteristic of Shri Lakshman's character that he presents his feelings before Shri Ram emphatically what does not appeal to his mind, he contradicts even his statement but does not shed tears being overwhelmed. Prowess then overpowers him, but when he is aware of Shri Ram's final decision, he desists completely his insistence and follows him squarely.

To see mother Kausalya lamenting being distressed by the conduct of Dasharathji and Kaikeyi, devoted to brotherly-love Lakshman began to express his emotion to his mother—

अनुरक्तोऽस्मि भावेन भ्रातरं देवि तत्त्वतः ।
 सत्येन धनुषा चैव दत्तेनेष्टेन ते शपे ॥
 दीप्तमग्निमरण्यं वा यदि रामः प्रवेक्ष्यति ।
 प्रविष्टं तत्र मां देवि त्वं पूर्वमवधारय ॥
 हरामि वीर्याद् दुःखं ते तमः सूर्य इवोदितः ।
 देवी पश्यतु मे वीर्यं राघवश्चैव पश्यतु ॥

(Valmiki Ramayan, 2/21/16—18)

'Turning again to Kausalyā he said : "I swear to you by my bow as well as by the merit attained by me through truthfulness, charity and worship of gods that I am truly devoted to my eldest brother with the core of my heart, O godly lady ! If Śrī Rāma enters a blazing fire or retires to the forest, know me, O glorious lady, as having already entered the same. I shall presently dispel your sorrow by dint of my prowess even as the sun when risen drives away darkness. Let all people as well as Śrī Rāma (a scion of Raghu) witness my valour.' What a great brotherly love is reflected in these words!

Than after, he began to make all kinds of heroic talks—'O Arya! At once you should take over your right of sovereignty. I am at all ready in your service and protection with my bow-arrows in my hands. So long as, I stand in your support in the form of death, who is there so powerful to create any hindrance? There is no one in Ayodhya against you except Kaikeyi; but even if the entire Ayodhya goes against you, I will make Ayodhya empty of human beings with my sharp arrows. If even Bharat's maternal uncle or anyone of his kins comes in his support, I will kill him also. Infatuated with Kaikeyi, even if her father becomes our enemy on the instigation of Kaikeyi, I will arrest him or kill him. Sin will not stain to me in this act. It is our duty to teach a lesson to the unjust doer.'

त्वया चैव मया चैव कृत्वा वैरमनुत्तमम्।

कास्य शक्तिः श्रियं दातुं भरतायारिशासन॥

(Valmiki Ramayan, 2/21/15)

'What power has he to bestow royal fortune on Bharata entering into bitter enmity with you as well as with me, O chastiser of foes?'

Consoling Lakshman Shri Ram uttered—

तव लक्ष्मण जानामि मयि स्नेहमनुत्तमम्।
 विक्रमं चैव सत्त्वं च तेजश्च सुदुरासदम्॥
 धर्मो हि परमो लोके धर्मे सत्यं प्रतिष्ठितम्।
 धर्मसंश्रितमप्येतत्पितुर्वचनमुत्तमम् ॥
 सोऽहं न शक्यामि पुनर्नियोगमतिवर्तितुम्।
 पितुर्हि वचनाद्वीर कैकेय्याहं प्रचोदितः॥
 तदेतां विसृजानार्या क्षत्रधर्माश्रितां मतिम्।
 धर्ममाश्रय मा तैक्ष्ण्यं मदबुद्धिरनुगम्यताम्॥

(Valmiki Ramayan, 2/21/39, 41, 43, 44)

"I know your unsurpassed love for me as also your valour and strength as well as your glory, which cannot be easily approached by others. Indeed, righteousness is paramount in the world and truthfulness is rooted in piety. This command of my father too is supreme in that it is based on righteousness. Since I have been commanded by Kaikeyī to go into exile according to the pledge given to her by my father, O valiant prince, I, constituted as I am, dare not flout her command in any case. Therefore, give up this unworthy thought of assuming the reins of government even by taking captive or killing the reigning king, deriving its support from military heroism. Take your stand on righteousness and do not resort to severity. Let my resolution of carrying out the royal command, be followed."

O brother! Have patience being free from anger and sorrow, forgetting the humiliation be delighted. The

father is truthful and pledged to the truth. He is afraid of fate in the next world because of deviation from the truth, he will become fearless if I follow truth. If my coronation is not held up, my father's truthfulness will go away which will be the great cause of his sorrow and his sorrow will also be a matter of great sorrow for us. O brother! It is the destiny, the chief cause of my exile otherwise, why would Kaikeyi to whom I was the most affectionate, have demanded the boon of my banishment? It is the providence to divert her mind. Till today all the mothers including Kausalya and Kaikeyi had the equal treatment of love for me. Kaikeyi can never utter any harsh word against me if she had not been under the sway of providence.

So, agreeing to my words and being free from sorrow and not taking it ill, get the preparation of coronation cancelled at once.

Hearing the words of Shri Ram, bowing down his head, Lakshman pondered over for a little while, but the embodiment of prowess, Lakshman did not appreciate the logic of Shri Ram, his eye-brows were knitted, his head got curled and overpowered by anger he began to breath like a serpent and slamming the ground with hands he said—'Why are you making this confusing talk? You are a great warrior—

विक्रवो वीर्यहीनो यः स दैवमनुवर्तते ।

वीराः सम्भावितात्मानो न दैवं पर्युपासते ॥

दैवं पुरुषकारेण यः समर्थः प्रबाधितुम् ।

न दैवेन विपन्नार्थः पुरुषः सोऽवसीदति ॥

द्रक्ष्यन्ति त्वद्य दैवस्य पौरुषं पुरुषस्य च।
दैवमानुषयोरद्य व्यक्ता व्यक्तिर्भविष्यति ॥

(Valmiki Ramayan, 2/23/16—18)

‘He alone who is cowardly and powerless trusts in fate. The valiant, who are possessed of a strong mind, never seek shelter in fate. A man who is capable of setting aside the decree of fate through personal effort never feels disheartened on his purpose being thwarted by destiny. People will see today the relative strength of fate and a human being. The distinction between fate and a human being will be manifest today.’

ब्रवीहि कोऽद्यैव मया वियुज्यतां
तवासुहृत्प्राणयशःसुहृज्जनैः ।
यथा तवेयं वसुधा वशा भवे-
त्तथैव मां शाधि तवास्मि किङ्करः ॥

(Valmiki Ramayan, 2/23/40)

‘Speak out, which enemy of yours may be deprived this very day of his life, fame of invincibility and relations. Pray, instruct me how to proceed so that the globe may be brought under your control. I am at your beck and call.’ Saying so Lakshmanji began to weep in Shri Ram’s love. The Lord Shri Ram, wiping away his tears with his own hands and consoling him said—‘Brother! Take it granted that to obey the command of mother-father is the foremost moral duty of a son, that is why I have agreed to obey my father’s command. Then, again more what is there the value of this sovereignty, which is just like the short screen of a dream—

यदिदं दृश्यते सर्वं राज्यं देहादिकं च यत्।
 यदि सत्यं भवेत्तत्र आयासः सफलश्च ते॥
 भोगा मेघवितानस्थविद्युल्लेखेव चञ्चलाः।
 आयुरप्यग्निसन्तप्तलोहस्थजलबिन्दुवत् ॥
 क्रोधमूलो मनस्तापः क्रोधः संसारबन्धनम्।
 धर्मक्षयकरः क्रोधस्तस्मात्क्रोधं परित्यज ॥
 तस्माच्छान्तिं भजस्वाद्य शत्रुरेवं भवेन् ते।
 देहेन्द्रियमनःप्राणबुद्ध्यादिभ्यो विलक्षणः ॥
 आत्मा शुद्धः स्वयंज्योतिरविकारी निराकृतिः।
 यावद्देहेन्द्रियप्राणैर्भिन्नत्वं नात्मनो विदुः ॥
 तावत्संसारदुःखौघैः पीड्यन्ते मृत्युसंयुताः।
 तस्मात्त्वं सर्वदा भिन्नमात्मानं हृदि भावय ॥

(Adhyatma Ramayan, 2/4/19, 20, 36, 38—40)

If this empire and body etc., had been real, your labour could prove to be worthful to some extent, but the enjoyments of the sense organs are so evanescent like the lightening in the midst of clouds and this span of life is momentary like the drops of water on the heated iron in the fire. Brother! This anger is the root of the mental agony; It is the anger, alone that binds us, to the world anger ruins righteousness. So, giving up anger Be peaceful, then, this world is free from enemy for you. Soul is unique apart from this body, sense-organs, mind, vital force, intellect etc. That spirit is pure, self-illuminated, immutable, formless. Unless a human being realizes that the soul is separate from the body, sense organs, vital energy, he is compelled to suffer the miseries concerning to birth and death in the world. So, O Lakshman! Imbibe in your mind

that this soul is ever distinct from them and it is only a witness.'

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Shri Ram became ready to depart for the woods. Sitaji also accompanies him, Lakshman's anger is cooled down, but he is restless to accompany Shri Ram; running he rolls down at the feet of Shri Ram and with tears in his eyes he utters—'O the Lord of Raghu's race! You had advised me to follow your decision, then why are you departing today leaving me here?'—

न देवलोकाक्रमणं नामरत्वमहं वृणे ।
ऐश्वर्यं चापि लोकानां कामये न त्वया विना ॥

(Valmiki Ramayan, 2/31/5)

'O brother! Without you I do not wish to ascend to heaven nor do I solicit godhood nor again do I crave for the rulership of the spheres.' It is noteworthy that at a time Lakshman's fierce and dreadful, splendorous image on oneside and whereas on the other side his entreaty like a child before mother! This is the distinctive characteristic of Lakshman's brotherly love. Shri Ramji was charmed with this behaviour of brother Lakshman and clasping him to his bosom he said—

स्निग्धो धर्मरतो धीरः सततं सत्पथे स्थितः ।
प्रियः प्राणसमो वश्यो विजेयश्च सखा च मे ॥

(Valmiki Ramayan, 2/31/10)

'Brother! You are affectionate to me, righteous and always virtuous, you are dear to me as my own life, you are obedient and amenable to my control and my friend;' it is beyond doubt, but if you accompany me

who will console here the grief-stricken father and mother afflicted by distress?’

मातु पिता गुरु स्वामि सिख सिर धरि करहिं सुभायँ ।

लहेउ लाभु तिन्ह जनम कर नतरु जनमु जग जायँ ॥

अस जियँ जानि सुनहु सिख भाई । करहु मातु पितु पद सेवकाई ॥
रहु करहु सब कर परितोषू । नतरु तात होइहि बड़ दोषू ॥

‘Those, who reverently and unconstrainedly follow the advice of their father, mother and preceptor and master, have reaped the fruit of their birth or else their coming into this world has been in vain.

Bearing this in mind, brother, listen to my advice and wait upon the feet of our father and mothers. Stay to comfort all; otherwise, brother, we shall incur great sin.

No doubt, it is an wholesome teaching, but the cuckoo (Chatak) not even looks towards water of the Ganga; it looks only to a drop of rain during Arcturus (Swati drop), the single minded devotee Lakshman was in a fix for a while dared not speak due to being under the sway of emotional love, then being restless he fell on the feet of Shri Ram and washing His feet with tears uttered—

दीन्हि मोहि सिख नीकि गोसाई । लागि अगम अपनी कदराई ॥
नरबर धीर धरम धुर धारी । निगम नीति कहूँ ते अधिकारी ॥
मैं सिसु प्रभु सनेहँ प्रतिपाला । मंदरु मेरु कि लेहिं मराला ॥
गुर पितु मातु न जानउँ काहू । कहउँ सुभाउ नाथ पतिआहू ॥
जहँ लगि जगत सनेह सगाई । प्रीति प्रतीति निगम निजु गाई ॥
मोरें सबड़ एक तुम्ह स्वामी । दीनबंधु उर अंतरजामी ॥
धरम नीति उपदेसिअ ताही । कीरति भूति सुगति प्रिय जाही ॥
मन क्रम बचन चरन रत होई । कृपासिंधु परिहरिअ कि सोई ॥

'My Lord, you have given me a sound advice; but due to my faint heartedness it sounds impracticable to me. Only those noble men who are self-possessed and champion to the cause of virtue, are fit to be taught the gospel of the Vedas and moral tenets. I am a mere child fostered by your loving care, can a cygnet lift Mount Mandarus or Meru? I know no preceptor nor father nor mother; I tell you sincerely; believe me my Lord, whatever ties of affection, love and confidence exist in the world as declared by the Vedas—for me they are centred in you and you alone, my Lord. O friend of the afflicted, O knower of the innermost heart of all! Piety and propriety should be taught to him who is fond of glory, fortune and a noble destiny. He, however, who is devoted to your feet in thought, word and deed—should he be abandoned? O ocean of grace?'

When the Lord saw that Lakshman had lost his nerve through love and he could not be detained, he commanded him then—

मागहु बिदा मातु सन जाई । आवहु बेगि चलहु बन भाई॥

'Go and ask leave of your mother; then quickly return and accompany me to the woods.'

Lakshman went up to his mother Sumitra fearing that she might not allow him. But she was also none else but Lakshman's mother, she said very affectionately—

रामं दशरथं विद्धि मां विद्धि जनकात्मजाम्।

अयोध्यामटवीं विद्धि गच्छ तात यथासुखम्॥

(Valmiki Ramayan, 2/40/9)

'She said to Lakṣmaṇa again, "Know Rāma to be Daśaratha as your father, look upon Sītā (the daughter of Janaka) as myself (your mother) and esteem the forest as Ayodhyā (your home) and depart, dear son, happily.'

अवध तहाँ जहाँ राम निवासू । तहँई दिवसु जहाँ भानु प्रकासू ॥
 अस जियँ जानि संग बन जाहू । लेहु तात जग जीवन लाहू ॥
 पुत्रवती जुबती जग सोई । रघुपति भगतु जासु सुतु होई ॥
 नतरु बाँझ भलि बादि बिआनी । राम बिमुख सुत तें हित जानी ॥
 तुम्हरेहिँ भाग रामु बन जाहीं । दूसर हेतु तात कछु नाहीं ॥

'Ayodhya is there where Ram dwells; there alone is the day where there is Sun light. Bearing this in mind, accompany him to the forest and derive, my son, the benefit your existence in the world. That woman alone can be said to have borne a male issue, whose son is a devotee of Ram, the Lord of Raghus. Otherwise she had better remain issueless; for she who deems herself fortunate in having a son hostile to Ram has yeaned in vain. It is due to your good fortune that Ram is proceeding to the forest; there is no other reason for his doing so, my boy.'

Lakshman got his will fulfilled. He rushed up to Shri Ram and both the brothers along with Sita departed for the forest leaving the citizens of Ayodhya in lamentation.

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One day it so happened that the evening set in while walking in the forest. None of them was habituated of walking on foot, all the three were fatigued, black serpents were moving all around. Sweeping place

beneath a tree, Lakshman spread the bed of tender leaves. Shri Ram and Sita sat on it. Lakshmanji managed for the food. To see this hardship Shri Ram began to say repeatedly with feelings of affection—
‘Brother! Go back to Ayodhya and comfort your mothers there. Let me, along with Sita suffer here. In its reply Lakshman uttered very heart-touching words—

न च सीता त्वया हीना न चाहमपि राघव।
मुहूर्तमपि जीवावो जलान्मत्स्याविवोद्धृतौ ॥
नहि तातं न शत्रुघ्नं न सुमित्रां परंतप।
द्रष्टुमिच्छेयमद्याहं स्वर्गं चापि त्वया विना ॥

(Valmiki Ramayan, 2/53/31-32)

‘Bereft of you, O scion of Raghu, neither Sītā nor I myself can survive even for a shortwhile any more than fish taken out of water. Today I wish to see neither father nor Śatrughna (my younger brother) nor Sumitrā (my own mother) nor even heaven without you, O tormentor of foes!’ Blessed is such brotherly love!

During the period when Shri Ram-Sita sleep in night at the place of Nishad king, Guha, on the grass bed prepared by Lakshman, Shri Lakshman is doing the duty of a watchman standing there at some distance. Guha comes and says—‘You are not in practice of remaining without sleep, please, go and sleep. I have already managed everything for his security guards.’ Hearing this Lakshmanji started uttering—

कथं दाशरथौ भूमौ शयाने सह सीतया।
शक्या निद्रा मया लब्धुं जीवितानि सुखानि वा ॥

(Valmiki Ramayan, 2/86/10)

'How can sleep be had, or even life or comforts be enjoyed by me when Śrī Rāma, son of Daśaratha, is reposing on the ground with Sītā?'

In the forest, Shri Lakshmanji remains always alert in the service of Shri Ram and Sita. It was Lakshman who had made a good hut, collecting woods and leaves and by digging the earth with the spade. It was all the responsibility of Lakshmanji to bring fruits and roots, to manage the requisites of oblations, to carry the bamboo made box of Sita's garments and ornaments and walk carrying the arms and weapons and to fetch the water from a long distance through the fields in the winter nights, to wrap the stones and trees with old clothes to distinguish the path, to sweep, to clean the kitchen, to make the altar; to collect the burning woods and to guard remaining awake the whole night and Lakshmanji did all these works efficiently.

सेवहिं लखनु करम मन बानी । जाइ न सीलु सनेहु बखानी ॥
सेवहिं लखनु सीय रघुबीरहि । जिमि अबिबेकी पुरुष सरीरहि ॥

'Lakshman waited upon Shri Ram in thought, word and deed with an amiability and devotion more than one could tell. While Lakshman in his turn waited upon Sita and Shri Ram (the Hero of Raghu's race) just as undiscerning person tends his own body.'

In the obedience Lakshmanji stands at top and becomes a great ideal. The command may be against to any extent, he acts upon silently without any 'if and but', some instances of his obedience are worthseeing here—

(1) At the time of banishment considering the command he completely changed his mood for revolting.

(2) He was very furious at the time of Bharat coming to Chitrakut, but he became cool realizing the fact on the command of Shri Ram just at once.

(3) While at the war with Khar-Dusan, Shri Ram ordered—‘I just fight with them, you; go with Sita in the mount Cave and sit there.’ This command to escape from the battlefield for a valorous like Lakshman was very hard but he accepted it without any if and but.

(4) Shri Sitaji was coming from Ashok Vatika in a palanquin. Shri Ram ordered Vibhishan to bring her on foot, it pained Lakshman first, but he remained silent.

(5) Reproached by Shri Ram when Sita commanded Lakshman to lit fire to the pyre, on the indication of Shri Ram, with a sore afflicting heart he prepared the pyre.

(6) At the time of Sita’s exile, to obey the command of Shri Ram, turning his heart to stone and remaining afflicted by his inner distress even, he left Sita alone in the forest.

In his whole life there are only two instances of his disobedience, first to go to Shri Ram who has gone away to catch the illusory deer; leaving Sita alone in the hermitage and the second to allow sage Durvasa to go to Shri Ram to save the empire from the curse of Durvasa sage accepting his own suffering of being abandoned. But both the occurrences are exceptions.

On the harsh words of Sitaji, Lakshman persuaded Sitaji to convince her—‘Mother! These are the words

of illusive Marich. There is none in all the three worlds to win Shri Ramji; have patience, please. Disobeying the Lord Shri Ramji, I can not go anywhere leaving you alone here.' Even then, when she spoke the fiery words—'I know, you are the messenger of Bharat, there is sensuousness in the corner of your mind, you have greed for me, I will prefer to burn myself to ashes but any cost I cannot come under the clutches of the both—you and Bharat.' These words like arrows pierced the spotless heart of self-restrained Lakshman, he said—'Mother Vaidehi! You are like goddess for me; so, I can say nothing to you; but I am unable to bear your pinching words. O the forest gods! You are witness, I am guided by the commands of my elder brother, Ram, even then, the mother Sita has doubt in me because of her female nature. I apprehend some misfortune to befall. Mother! May the forest God protect you! I just go. 'In such a condition to go from there can not be condemned.'

In the second case, Lakshman had disobeyed to save his brother including the whole family as well as the empire.

Some are of the opinion that Lakshman had love for Ram only but his rancour to Bharat remained as it was, but it is not right. He could never forgive anyone disobeying Shri Ram, but when he came to know that Bharat was not at fault, Lakshman repented excessively for his action and he began to love and have devotion for Bharat as usual. Once, in the winter season experiencing the effect of chilly cold in the forest,

Lakshmanji being worried of Bharat dwelling at Nandigram says—

अस्मिस्तु पुरुषव्याघ्र काले दुःखसमन्वितः ।
 तपश्चरति धर्मात्मा त्वद्भक्त्या भरतः पुरे ॥
 त्यक्त्वा राज्यं च मानं च भोगांश्च विविधान् बहून् ।
 तपस्वी नियताहारः शेते शीते महीतले ॥
 सोऽपि वेलामिमां नूनमभिषेकार्थमुद्यतः ।
 वृतः प्रकृतिभिर्नित्यं प्रयाति सरयूं नदीम् ॥
 अत्यन्तसुखसंवृद्धः सुकुमारो हिमार्दितः ।
 कथं त्वपररात्रेषु सरयूमवगाहते ॥
 पद्मपत्रेक्षणः श्यामः श्रीमान्निरुदरो महान् ।
 धर्मज्ञः सत्यवादी च ह्रीनिषेधो जितेन्द्रियः ॥
 प्रियाभिभाषी मधुरो दीर्घबाहुररिन्दमः ।
 संत्यज्य विविधान्सौख्यानार्यं सर्वात्मनाश्रितः ॥
 जितः स्वर्गस्तव भ्रात्रा भरतेन महात्मना ।
 वनस्थमपि तापस्ये यस्त्वामनुविधीयते ॥

(Valmiki Ramayan, 3/16/27—33)

‘At this time of the year, O tiger among men, the pious-minded Bharata, full of agony (caused by separation from you) is practising austerities in the city out of devotion to you. Giving up the sovereignty and honour as well as the manifold and diverse enjoyments and living on a restricted diet, the ascetic repose on the cold surface of the earth without bedding. Ready for a dip in the river, and followed by his ministers, he too without doubt walks to the Sarayū river daily at this hour. Tormented by cold, though brought up in the highest luxury and tender as he is, how indeed does he take a dip in the Sarayū during the last watch

of the night? With his eyes resembling the petals of a lotus, dark-brown of complexion, majestic, almost devoid of belly, a great knower of Dharma, truthful, bashful, master of his senses, polite of expression, amiable, long-armed, the subduer of enemies, he has given up the various pleasures and is devoted to you (his elder brother) with all his being. Paradise has been conquered by your high-souled brother, Bharata, who is following you in your ascetic life, even though you are staying in the forest (away from him). '

On reading these words of Lakshman can it be said that Lakshman had no love for Bharat? His great love itself is reflected in these words.

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Being at all free from his pride of wisdom how Lakshman was dedicated whole-heartedly to the service of the Lord. Shri Ram's service comes to our knowledge evidently when Shri Ram instructs him to make a hermitage at any suitable place in Panchvati after a considerable lookout. Then, service devoted Lakshman says—'O Lord! I can do nothing with my own free will.

परवानस्मि काकुत्स्थ त्वयि वर्षशतं स्थिते।

स्वयं तु रुचिरे देशे क्रियतामिति मां वद॥

(Valmiki Ramayan, 3/15/7)

'O Kakusth! So long as you are present, say, a hundred years, I am a dependent only. Therefore, tell me of your own accord to erect a hut at a place which is agreeable to you.'

It does not mean that Lakshmanji was unwise. He was very intelligent and learned and from time to time

he used his wisdom also for the Lord Shri Ram's service, but where he was fully satisfied in Shri Ram's action only, he did not apply his mind. He had the tendency of anger and glow but that was only for Shri Ram's sake. Lakshman did not know at all to be lamenting, overwhelmed, deviation and to forgive Shri Ram's hostile. That is why those who judge him with another angle, find fault in his character; but Lakshman is fully innocent and spotless, a dedicated devotee of Shri Ram knowing well the secrets of Shri Ram and an ideal brother. If the examples of his wisdom is to be found out, let us read his conversation with Guha at a lonely place. When Nishada being overpowered by distress, blamed Kaikeyi with disparaging words and expressed sorrow to see Sita's husband, Shri Ram and Sita sleeping on the ground, Lakshmanji began to say to him in modest and sweet words—

काहु न कोउ सुख दुख कर दाता । निज कृत करम भोग सबु भ्राता ॥
जोग बियोग भोग भल मंदा । हित अनहित मध्यम भ्रम फंदा ॥
जनमु मरनु जहँ लगि जग जालू । संपति बिपति करमु अरु कालू ॥
धरनि धामु धनु पुर परिवारू । सरगु नरकु जहँ लगि ब्यवहारू ॥
देखिअ सुनिअ गुनिअ मन माहीं । मोह मूल परमारथु नाहीं ॥
सपनें होइ भिखारि नृपु रंकु नाकपति होइ ।

जागें लाभु न हानि कछु तिमि प्रपंच जियँ जोइ ॥

अस बिचारि नहिं कीजिअ रोसू । काहुहि बादि न देइअ दोसू ॥
मोह निसाँ सबु सोवनिहारा । देखिअ सपन अनेक प्रकारा ॥
एहिं जग जामिनि जागहिं जोगी । परमारथी प्रपंच बियोगी ॥
जानिअ तबहिं जीव जग जागा । जब सब बिषय बिलास बिरागा ॥
होइ बिबेकु मोह भ्रम भागा । तब रघुनाथ चरन अनुरागा ॥

सखा परम परमारथु एहू । मन क्रम बचन राम पद नेहू ॥
 राम ब्रह्म परमारथ रूपा । अबिगत अलख अनादि अनूपा ॥
 सकल बिकार रहित गतभेदा । कहि नित नेति निरूपहिं बेदा ॥
 भगत भूमि भूसुर सुरभि सुर हित लागि कृपाल ।
 करत चरित धरि मनुज तनु सुनत मिटहिं जग जाल ॥
 सखा समुझि अस परिहरि मोहू । सिय रघुबीर चरन रत होहू ॥

'No one is a cause of delight or pain to another, everyone reaps the fruit of one's own actions, brother. Union and separation, pleasurable and painful experiences, friends, foes and neutrals-snares of delusion are these. Even so birth and death, prosperity and adversity, destiny and time and all the illusion of the world; lands, houses, wealth, town and family, heaven and hell and all the phenomena of the world; nay, whatever is seen, heard or thought of with the mind has its root in ignorance: nothing exists in reality.

Suppose in a dream a beggar is crowned king or the lord of paradise is reduced to the state of a pauper; on waking the one does not gain nor does the other lose anything. So, must you look upon this world as a mere illusion.

Reasoning thus, be not angry nor blame any one in vain. Everyone is wallowing in the night of delusion and while asleep one sees dream of various kinds. In this night of mundane existence it is Yogis (mystics) alone who keep awake—Yogis who are in quest of the highest truth and remain aloof from the world. An embodied soul should be deemed as having awoken from the night of the world only when he develops an

aversion for the sensual enjoyments of the world. It is only when right understanding comes that the error of delusion disappears and then alone one develops love for the feet of Shri Ram. O friend! The highest spiritual goal is this; to be devoted to the feet of Shri Ram in thought, word and deed. Shri Ram is no other than Brahma (God), the Supreme, reality, unknown, imperceptible, beginningless in comparable, Him in negative terms (not this).

For the sake of His devotees, Earth, the brahmans, cows and gods, the gracious Lord takes the form of a man and performs actions by hearing of which the snares of the world are broken asunder.

Realizing this, O friend! Shed all infatuation and be devoted to the feet of Sita and the Hero of Raghu's race.'

Who is capable to sing the glory of Shri Lakshmanji? It is only in the character of Shri Lakshmanji that there is an excellent harmony of the highest spiritual goal and love, wisdom and simplicity, counselling and obedience, sharpness and friendship. The whole universe praises the Lord Shri Ram's virtues and merits and Shri Ram praises Bharat for his unique nobility and Bharat congratulates Lakshman for his luck. Then where do we stand in recounting in brief the virtues of Lakshman?



The Brother-Love of Shri Shatrughna

रिपुसूदन पद कमल नमामी। सूर सुसील भरत अनुगामी॥

‘I adore the lotus-feet of Śatrughna (lit., the slayer of his foes), who is valiant yet amiable in disposition, and a constant companion of Bharata.’

The servant of the Lord Shri Ram’s servant, Shri Shatrughnaji was the dearest and the most obedient brother of Shri Ram, Bharat and Lakshman. Shatrughnaji was a silent worker, lover, moral, reticent, truthful, dispassionate and simple, glorious, obedient to the elders, brave and terror for the enemies. In Shri Ramayan he does not occupy special and detail columns; but whatever the matter about him is available, gives us the glimpse of his high stature. As Shri Lakshmanji was the shadow of Shri Ram, similarly Shatrughna remained absorbed in the service of Shri Bharatji. He had accompanied Bharatji to his maternal home and returned along with him at the death of his father. He was also much grieved to get the news of the banishment of Shri Ram, Lakshman and Sita by Kaikeyi and his father’s death on the arrival at Ayodyha. He was well acquainted with the heroism of brother Lakshman, so, with a very heavy heart in amazement he said to Bharatji—

गतिर्यः सर्वभूतानां दुःखे किं पुनरात्मनः।
स रामः सत्त्वसम्पन्नः स्त्रिया प्रव्राजितो वनम्॥
बलवान्वीर्यसम्पन्नो लक्ष्मणो नाम योऽप्यसौ।
किं न मोचयते रामं कृत्वापि पितृनिग्रहम्॥

(Valmiki Ramayan, 2/78/2-3)

How strange that the same Śrī Rāma who is possessed of extraordinary might and is the support of all created beings in distress, much more of himself and his own people, was exiled into the forest by a woman ! What a pity that even Lakṣmaṇa, who is full of might and rich in prowess, did not deliver Śrī Rāma from distress, going the length even, if necessary, of restraining his father !

At this moment Shatrughnaji was overpowered with anger and agony, in the meanwhile one of the gatekeepers came and said—‘O Prince! The great cruel and wicked Kubja, who is the root of the evil plan of Shri Ram’s banishment and his Majesty’s death, is standing well decorated with garments and ornaments; if you think proper, teach her some lesson.’ Kubja was coming for reward from Bharatji and just at her sight, the gate-keeper had informed Shatrughnaji coming inside. Shatrughna became wrathful, holding the lock of her hair, he dragged her, She shrieked loudly. To see the situation the other female friends of Kubja ran away to Kausalya for shelter; they thought that there was no other way to escape from the wrath of Shatrughna except going to the shelter of sweet spoken, merciful Kausalya. When Kaikeyi interrupted he rebuked her also. Ultimately Bharat intervened and said to Shatrughna—‘Brother! That women are undeserving of death at the hands of men, otherwise I, myself, would have slain Kaikeyi—

इमामपि हतां कुब्जां यदि जानाति राघवः ।

त्वां च मां चैव धर्मात्मा नाभिभाषिष्यते ध्रुवम् ॥

(Valmiki Ramayan, 2/78/23)

‘Nay, Śrī Rāma, whose mind is given to piety, will surely never speak not only with you but also with me if he ultimately comes to know even of this humpback having been killed by us.’

Hearing the words of Bharat, Shatrughna released her. Here, it comes to the light that first, in the moral ethics of Shri Ram, what an honourable position had been given to the women as a whole, the women were considered undeserving of murder. Secondly, Bharat, even in this situation checked his brother Shatrughna from going on the immoral path due to the brotherly-love telling him the moral ethics of Shri Ram’s morality and thirdly, the wrathful Shatrughna agreed to his brother’s advice at once. We should learn the lesson from this. Those who condemn our cultural heritage saying that in the ancient days the Indian males looked the women disdainly, they should learn lesson from this episode.

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Then, Shatrughna also accompanies Bharat to the forest to persuade Shri Ram to return and he searches out Shri Ram’s hut by the permission of Bharat. When Bharat goes hurriedly to see Shri Ram from a distance, Shatrughnaji also runs after him eager for the sight of Shri Ram—

शत्रुघ्नश्चापि रामस्य ववन्दे चरणौ रुदन्।

तावुभौ च समालिङ्ग्य रामोऽप्यश्रूण्यवर्तयत्॥

(Valmiki Ramayan, 2/91/40)

He, too, salutes Shri Ram’s feet shedding tears from his eyes, Shri Ram also clasps this both the brothers to His bosom with His eyes flowing tears.’ In

the same way, Lakshman also meets his younger brother Shatrughna—

भेटेउ लखन ललकि लघु भाई।

‘Lakshman eagerly meets his younger brother Shatrughna lovingly.’

Then, in between the dialogue of Shri Ram and Bharat, there was no need for Lakshman and Shatrughna to intervene. The representative leaders of the both their elder brothers were present there. Shatrughna had already surrendered his whole life to Bharat. That is why Bharat was saying—

सानुज पठइअ मोहि बन कीजिअ सबहि सनाथ।

‘Let us the two brothers me and Shatrughna retire to the wood. O Lord! You, Lakshman and Sita kindly go back to Ayodhya and let the citizens feel the shelter of their master.’

If it had not been the consent of Shatrughna or Bharat had not been confident of Shatrughna on his brotherly devotional love, how could have Bharat uttered so?

While departing with sandals, both the brothers again embraced Shri Ram. They take the reverential round of Shri Ram. Like Lakshman, Shatrughna was also sharp and bold. He was wrathful to Kaikeyi in his mind. Shri Ram understood it. So, at the time of farewell from the forest Shri Ram instructed Shatrughna the lesson on account of affection—

मातरं रक्ष कैकेयीं मा रोषं कुरु तां प्रति॥

मया च सीतया चैव शप्तोऽसि रघुनन्दन।

(Valmiki Ramayan, 2/112/27-28)

‘O brother! Take care of mother Kaikeyi; be not angry with her You are hereby adjured to do so by me as well as by Sitā, O delight of the Raghus!’ While delivering these words, his eyes were filled with tears. It reveals the great mutual love of Shri Ram and Shatrughna.

Then, Shatrughnaji remained on duty in the service of the subjects and royal family according to His command after coming back to Ayodhya with Bharat and when Lord Ram returns from the forest he meets Him with great love—

पुनि प्रभु हरषि सत्रुहन भेंटे हृदयँ लगाइ।

‘Then, the Lord being delighted clasped Shatrughna to his bosom.’

And then he deposes himself in His service. Shri Ram is coronated and there is peace, prosperity, morality in the reign of Lord Shri Ram and all are happy and contented.

Once, the sages came to Ram and said—‘The demon, Lavanatur is creating a great chaos. He devours the living beings and specially the ascetics. We are in great trouble.’ Shri Ram said to them—‘Don’t be frightened, I just manage to kill him.’ Then, Shri Ram asked his brothers—‘Who is ready to advance to kill Lavanatur?’ Bharatji said—‘Your majesty! If you permit, I will go.’ Then on this Lakshman’s brother Shatrughna said humbly—‘O the Lord of Raghus! When You were in the forest, Shri Bharatji had observed the rule facing many great hardships, he dwelt out of the city at the Nandigram, slept on the bed of grass, ate fruits and roots and put on the hermits garments with matted hair.

Now, Your servant, I am already present in Your service, in his place I should be sent there.' The Lord Shri Ram said—'Alright, if you desire, do so; I will install you on the kingdom of the beautiful city of Madhudaitya. You are brave, you can establish a city there. Having killed Lavanashur rule there in a righteous way. Whatever I have said, don't repudiate it; because the youngers should obey the elders. Guru Vasishtha will coronate you in an ordained way; obey my command.' Shri Ram told the importance of obeying the order because Shri Ram knew the sacrificing attitude of Shatrughna. If Shri Ram had not uttered so, he would have not accepted the sovereignty easily. We come to know this by his reply. Shatrughnaji said—

'O the foremost among the mankind! I consider it immoral that the younger brother should be coronated in the presence of the elder brother. On the otherside, your order must be followed even. It is you from whose mouth I have heard this morality. I was at fault to intervene in Bharatji's words—

व्याहृतं दुर्वचो घोरं हन्तास्मि लवणं मृधे ।
 तस्यैवं मे दुरुक्तस्य दुर्गतिः पुरुषर्षभ ॥
 उत्तरं न हि वक्तव्यं ज्येष्ठेनाभिहिते पुनः ।
 अधर्मसहितं चैव परलोकविवर्जितम् ॥

(Valmiki Ramayan, 7/63/5-6)

'It is most unfortunate that I have said something improper: 'I will kill Lavaṇa in battle'. I think I have been put in this unenviable position as a result of my saying so. When the elder one says something, the younger should not make a reply. Violation would be against the norms of Dharma and spoil the other

world..’ How praiseworthy is Shatrughna! He considers the gain of sovereignty as to court trouble. What an ideal sacrifice is! He again says—‘Kakustha! I got one punishment, now, if again I speak anything on your words, lest I should be punished again with another punishment; so I have to say nothing. I am ready to act upon your will.’

According to the Lord’s will Shatrughna was coronated. Then, he attacked on Lavanasur; Shri Ram provided him four thousand horses, two thousand chariots, one hundred elephants of superior quality, the trading merchants, one lakh of golden coins to meet the expenses and giving him different types of preachings. He bade Shatrughna farewell. It makes it very clear how dear Shatrughna was to Lord Ram!

He started his journey halting in the hermitages of the sages. He halted for one night in the hermitage of Valmikiji also; on that very night Lav and Kush were born of Sitaji. So, that night was very pleasant to Shatrughnaji. Reaching Madhupur, Shatrughnaji committed the murder of Lavanasur. The gods and sages blessed him. Then after the stay of twelve years at Madhupuri, Shatrughnaji came back to view the sight of Shri Ram, the Lord of Raghus. On his way back, he again halted at Valmiki’s hermitage. Now, Lav and Kush had grown up aged twelve years. Valmiki had already taught them the recitation of the Ramayana. So, Lav and Kush read out the pleasant and heart touching recitation of Ramayan before Shatrughna by the permission of the hermit. Shatrughna was charmed to hear the praise of Shri Ram—

श्रुत्वा पुरुषशार्दूलो विसंज्ञो वाष्पलोचनः ।
 स मुहूर्तमिवासंज्ञो विनिःश्वस्य मुहुर्मुहुः ॥

(Valmiki Ramayan, 7/71/17)

‘Having heard the story duly sung, the lion among men, Śatrughna, with tears in his eyes, was rendered unconscious, and fell into a swoon immediately taking deep sighs repeatedly.’ How blessed he is!

Then, after reaching Ayodhya he comforted himself with the sight of all the brothers along with Shri Ram. Again after some days, he came back to Madhupuri.

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The time of departing for the Supreme abode approached. Knowing it, having handed over the empire to his two sons, the self-restrained Shatrughna ran away to Shri Ram and saluting His feet he began to say in the choked voice—

कृत्वाभिषेकं सुतयोर्द्वयो राघवनन्दन ।
 तवानुगमने राजन् विद्धि मां कृतनिश्चयम् ॥
 न चान्यदद्य वक्तव्यमतो वीर न शासनम् ।
 विहन्यमानमिच्छामि मद्विधेन विशेषतः ॥

(Valmiki Ramayan, 7/108/14-15)

‘O descendant of Raghu, know me as one having decided to follow you after having coronated my two sons. No word other than that of consent is to be spoken by you, O brave one ! I do not wish that your orders be transgressed by one like me, in particular.’

The Lord accepted his prayer and all together with Shri Ram attained the Supreme abode.



CONCLUSION

This is merely a glimpse of the ideal brotherly-love of the four venerable characters of the Ramayana. This article has been written specially on the excellent brotherly-love. Other descriptions are by the way according to the references, so the other ideal lesson giving subjects have not been possible to be discussed duly and accordingly. Under this topic most of the descriptions are based on Valmiki, Adhyatma and Ramcharitmanas.

Actually, who is capable to find the depth of the character of Lord Shri Ram and His brothers? My effort is simply for my own satisfaction, this is my earnest request to the men of letters to pardon me for my errors. It is in our interest to take the full advantage from the outstanding blotless ideal characters of Shri Ram and His beloved brothers. Despite being the embodiment of truth, consciousness and bliss, He played activities like a human beings, which can be practised by us in our practical life considering them as our ideal.

Some of us argue that when Shri Ram is the manifestation of the Supreme Lord, what was the need of His incarnation, He could make everything possible by His own eternal power? It is undoubtedly true that the Lord is capable to do everything, nothing is impossible for Him, and He does so, but by His

incarnation in the world He has acted the sportive activities so because we may be graceful by imitating and singing in His praise. If the Lord had not played this role to teach us lesson by incarnating, how and where from could it be possible for us to get such ideal lessons? Now, it becomes our moral duty to become His true devotee by hearing, pondering over and living His frolicsome activities. This article has become lengthy, so it is over here.



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